3
センス
illustration
ともぞ
Yomu Mishima
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ヒーロー文庫

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EPILOGUE

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三嶋与夢

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セブンス

ノウェム、アリア、
ソフィアの三人は
落ち着いた雰囲気の
喫茶店で合流していた。
「ライエルの奴、また勝手に
何かしようとしてない？」

セレスの右手にはレイピアが。
そして、左手にはロンドが抜いた
短剣が握られていた。

姉のミランダは、
妹のシャノンのベッドで
妹に膝枕をされている。

「ライエル様！」
「このまま一気に決めてやらぁ！」
ジャイアントワームは口を大きく開き、俺を食い殺そうと構えていた。

INTRODUCTION

冒険者として迷宮討伐に
参加する事になった**ライエル**たち。
しかし、想像以上の困難の連続でした。
迷宮に入っても先回りをされ稼げない。
対抗心を燃やす若手冒険者パーティー。
他の冒険者たちの妨害を受けて迷宮討伐に苦労させられます。
そこで**歴代当主たち**はライエルに秘策を授けるのですが、
その内容にまた困惑させられるライエル。
歴代当主がライエルに授けた秘策とは?
迷宮討伐でライエルたちは稼げるのか?
そして迷宮内の不思議な
現象に込められた意味とは?
宝玉内の歴代当主たちに頼り、
急かされ、そして巻き込まれるライエル。
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Prologue

.

The city Dalien where the beginner adventurers gathered.

It was close to July. The season was going to enter summer for real.

Under the strong sunlight, the adventurers were wearing appearance that exposed little skin──they were wearing thick clothes. This was something natural for adventurers who were going outside to fight monster. If they exposed a lot of their skin, that also meant that was how much they were exposing their bare skin to monster. The people wearing metal equipment covered themselves with cloth so that heat wouldn't dwell inside the metal.

Perhaps other people would think that it would be fine if they dressed lightly inside the city. But for adventurer, the equipment and tool they worn were their tools of the trade and also their assets. It would be unbearable if they took them off and they got stolen.

As the result, a sordid group was passing through under the blazing sun.

It was a familiar sight in Dalien.

I, Lyle Walt who will go out to hunt monster after this am also wearing thick clothes from the morning and getting sweaty. My blue hair is a bit wet from sweat and cling on my forehead.

"H, hot"

A five man party.

The magician with her characteristic side ponytail, Novem Forxus hold out a flask to me. Her heirloom staff that is gleaming silver is wrapped in cloth. She is also putting on the hood of her navy blue robe.

"Lyle-sama, please try to frequently hydrate yourself. And don’t forget to replenish the salt too."

My former fiancée Novem who is worrying about me is a capable woman who devotedly takes care of me who got driven out from my house.

When I accept the flask and drink the water inside, the instructor Zelphy warn me. Her purple hair is kept short. She is wearing leather armor and her fighting style used sword and shield.

In Dalien she is one of the veteran adventurers.

"Be careful to not drink too much. After that, when you put water into your mouth, wet the inside of your mouth before drinking it in."

She is giving an advice that is fitting for a veteran, but Zelphy-san’s job is to turn us into full-fledged adventurer.

We paid a high fee to hire her as instructor for that. The fund came from Novem’s money from her selling her dowry.

I’m unable to raise my head in front of Novem who is this heroically devoted toward me. I can’t but, there are parts in Novem’s thinking that I cannot agree with no matter what.

Novem had a thinking that perhaps I should call as harem idea. She tends to gather woman around me. I cannot understand this behavior of her no matter what.

When I moved my gaze, I saw the two female adventurers who had joined our party for a while.

Aria Lockwarde with her red hair that has curls to the outside, she is hiding her healthy limbs with robe. She is walking energetically while carrying a spear on her shoulder.

Ahead of Aria-san’s gaze, there is a fruit seller who is opening a stall at the street.

"Hey, fruit will be good don’t you think? We can hydrate ourselves with it."

Aria-san is lively even though she is wearing a robe under this heat. She is pointing at a fruit.

Looking there, the adventurers are purchasing several of them. The red colored fruits are floating in water filled with ice. They are looking really tasty.

Sophia Rowley who is wearing a black robe is carrying a large battle axe that is wrapped in cloth on her back.

She looked at the direction Aria-san pointed at and looked a bit conflicted. Surely she wants to eat the fruit.

"Bu, but, even if we purchase them, it won’t be delicious anymore when we eat it at our break time due to the heat."

It’s a thinking that is really like the serious Sophia-san.

Aria-san objected to that.

"We can just eat it here. It will save our water, besides it’s this hot you know? You can just think of it as a part of managing our physical condition."

It’s this hot. There is also a possibility that when we have lunch outside the city, the food won’t pass our throat. Eating properly when we can eat and maintain our stamina is important matter.

Then Zelphy-san tap my back in a way that the surrounding cannot see. When I turn around, Zelphy-san signaled with her eyes to buy the fruit.

……So I’m the one buying huh.

I took out my wallet and purchased the fruits for several people’s share. The auntie at the fruit stall wiped the water on the fruit before handing it to us with a smile.

When I put the fruit on my cheek, it feels cold after getting submerged in ice water. My cheek's heat is cooling down.

Sophia-san looked a bit troubled.

"It's a bad manner to eat while standing."

She said that in hesitation. However, seeing Aria-san normally eating the fruit, she took a small bite into the fruit.

The fruit that isn't too big almost has no flesh inside. A slightly sour taste seeps into my body.

Aria-san throws the seed of the fruit into the waste basket beside the fruit stall and look at Novem. It feels like Novem's mouth that is biting into the fruit look strangely luscious.

"If it's Novem then you can create ice to put it inside our flask aren't you? If you do that we'll be able to drink cold water anytime."

Novem who heard that made a troubled face. Zelphy-san also looked at Aria-san in a bit of exasperation.

Sophia-san wipes her mouth and put the seed inside the waste basket while explaining.

"You don't know? Water that is created with magic will wreck your stomach if you drink it."

I looked surprised hearing that.

"Eh?"

The surrounding is throwing me and Aria-san in exasperation like they are looking at pitiful thing. Am I that lacking of common sense?

Then voices that only I can hear comes from the blue Jewel hanging on my neck. That is the heirloom of Walt House, the memory of the resurrected ancestors──.

The seven ancestors──no, right now it has become six ancestors, they are each showing their reaction to me with exasperated voice.

The Second, Crassel Walt seems to be worried at my lack of common sense.

[You don’t even know something like that? It’s really dreadful if your stomach is wrecked when fighting you know?]

The carefree tone of the Third, Sleigh Walt is laughing, but as expected he is also similarly troubled like the others.

[Certainly this is terrible. But, it’s great that you realize doing that is no good before you actually do it. Your stomach getting wrecked is a life and death problem, it’s not a joke.]

The Fourth who is wearing glasses, Max Walt also criticizes me too.

[If you drink water that is created from magic, you’ll definitely turn into burden. Lyle, you will end up making the girls around you taking care of your toilet business.]

Even the Fifth, Fredericks Walt who usually would only open his mouth when it’s necessary is also unable to stay quiet at my hopelessness.

[……I once sneaked into enemy camp and switched all their water with water made from magic. It turned into something horrible after that. Lyle, absolutely don’t drink that kind of water.]

This person, what was he doing sneaking into enemy camp?

The Sixth, Fiennes Walt is laughing hard.

[You will understand it even if you don’t like it once you make the mistake once though. Be glad that it doesn’t end up a mistake that you won’t be able to take back, Lyle.]

Certainly, if I don’t know it then perhaps I will prepare water with magic when I run out of water.

The Seventh, Brod Walt coughed.

[Magic is also not almighty. Lyle, remember that properly.]

Today I exposed my ignorance once more in front of my comrades and ancestors. My shoulders dropped. Then, Zelphy-san started walking.

"Come on, let’s go. We’ve to return before evening after all."

We exited the city of Dalien and hunt in a spot where we can return to the city within the same day. That became our daily routine recently.

But, we’re reaching the limit of earning money by hunting the monster nearby. It’s because our hunting time got limited by our trip coming and going, and also because the monster around Dalien yield little profit.

Zelphy-san talked to me that soon she planned to take us hunting monster where we will be staying overnight. Apparently if we do that, we will be able to earn more than now.

The Fourth is sighing inside the Jewel, and then he started talking with worry.

[Right now you have some leeway in fund, but at this rate it will be a bit hard. At Dalien you cannot earn much even if you hunt monster. The best you can do is only maintaining the current situation.]

The public order in Dalien is good, and the feudal lord Ventra-san is dispatching his knight and soldier to subjugate monster proactively.

Because of that, although the public order is good, it cause the adventurer’s earning to be small. In exchange there are a lot of various workplaces inside the city where they can make ends meet.

Fitting for a city that is said to be intended for beginner, it’s kind toward beginner adventurer. But, it’s also a city that is lacking for those who has graduated from being beginner.

The Sixth expresses his opinion to me.

[Lyle, the instruction period will end soon. You should think about your next destination soon. Will you stay for a while in Dalien, or else will you move to another place somewhere?]

The instruction period is three months.

It’s getting extended by two weeks, but the end will come in less than one month.

I don’t think that I’ve become a full fledged adventurer, but at least I’ve learned the way to be able to eat as adventurer.

"……After this huh."

I slightly raise my head and look up the blue sky. I wiped the sweat on my forehead and considered the matter of the future.

.

──Dalien adventurer guild.

Three receptionists were sitting side by side at the second floor’s reception, processing the formalities and so on.

The one standing out among those three is the blond haired blue eyed beautiful girl Santoa Maie……not, but the muscular large man with shaven head, Hawkins.

He was wearing a vest on top of a shirt. He was interacting with the adventurers gently and politely despite his appearance. He was a really serious staff and was respected even by the adventurers living in Dalien.

He was a person like that but, because of his stern appearance, the rookie adventurers tended to avoid him.

The person himself was also bothered by that but, he couldn’t do anything about that.

Hawkins who had free time that he didn’t know what to do with compared to the other two was starting to sort the area around his desk. Then a staff came out from behind the counter in panic.

When the staff found Hawkins, he approached him.

"What’s the matter?"

The young male staff handed several pieces of documents to Hawkins while explaining.

"A messenger from the feudal lord came. He is giving instruction for Hawkins-san to be present in the meeting too."

Hawkins gave a brief glance at the documents he received and frowned.

(This is……recently there is a lot of this.)

The documents reported that a dungeon was born in the area around Dalien. Hawkins left the reception duty to the male staff and immediately headed toward the guild’s meeting room.

He read the documents while walking and his eyes read over the dungeon’s scale and trait.

(The detail isn’t really known is it?)

The dungeon had just gotten discovered and the investigation also hadn’t progressed satisfactorily, but it seemed the scale of the dungeon wasn’t that big.

It was written that the period of its subjugation was predicted to be two weeks until a month.

But, there was one problem here.

(The feudal lord’s soldiers had just returned. It’ll be difficult to dispatch them again.)

Until recently there were two dungeons around Dalien. One was subjugated by the feudal lord’s army, while the other one was subjugated by the cooperation of the feudal lord’s army and the guild.

One of the subjugations was completely recently, so there was only one remaining.

But, it was hard to consider to dispatch the soldiers that had only just returned to carry out another subjugation.

(The skilled adventurers and large scale parties are all out for the dungeon subjugation so, making the remaining adventurers to deal with this……might be difficult.)

Hawkins was recalling the people that could possibly subjugate the dungeon from among the remaining adventurers.

Right now there were few people in Dalien who were reliable and experienced in dungeon subjugation. They would have no choice but to send lower quality adventurers.

While Hawkins was worrying in his head about what to do, he suddenly recalled Lyle's group that was being led by Zelphy.

(Lyle-kun's party……that's no good. They are still in the middle of instruction period, their experience also cannot be called abundant. The ability to deal with unpredictability will be necessary too, they should be kept from participating for now.)

Even if there was no problem with their strength, a dungeon was a place where it was unknown what would happen there. Furthermore, a dungeon that had just been born was really dangerous with how few the information about it was.

When Hawkins arrived at the door of the meeting room, he straightened his posture and knocked.

(Either way, it will be busy from now.)

Hawkins resolved himself to be busy from now before participating in the discussion with the messenger from the feudal lord Ventra──.

.

We who returned to Dalien were dirtied with sweat, sand, and monster fluid.

We sold the materials at the guild’s first floor, sold the magic stone to guild staff, then Zelphy-san got called out by a staff.

"Zelphy-san, can you come to the second floor later? There is a bit of problem, so they want to discuss various things with you."

Zelphy-san made a slightly troubled look. From the staff’s look, she must be thinking that another troublesome matter was going to be pushed on her again.

"Now look here, I’m in the middle of instructing period. It’s troubling if I’m asked to leave that job this often you know? What is it this time?"

The first time was bandit subjugation, the second time was trouble between territories. Certainly Zelphy-san got called many times even though she is in the middle of instructing job.

"That’s, it looks like another dungeon appeared. Even though we’re gathering manpower, many are still in the middle of subjugating another dungeon even now so there isn’t enough number."

Hearing that it’s a dungeon, the inside of the Jewel become noisy.

The ancestors spoke by turn.

[Dungeon! Nice. Perhaps we’ll also get a chance──]

[There is that possibility.]

[Hmm, in that case we’ll need to prepare various things.]

[I want to participate this time no matter what.]

[Haha~, I’m looking forward to it.]

[It’s really exciting.]

I heard that the feudal lord would be at their wits’ end when a dungeon appeared in their territory. But, it felt a bit like festival mood for Walt House.

Image

In reality, it might be good news for the feudal lord if it was possible to subjugate the dungeon. That’s what I’m thinking recently.

It seems inside the mind of the ancestors, if Zelphy-san is participating then we will also end up participating through the flow of event.

The Third is hurrying me.

[Come on Lyle, let’s join the discussion too.]

The ancestors are having fun. It seems they have no intention to listen to my opinion at all.

I called out to Zelphy-san.

"Say, is it alright for me to join that discussion too? Somehow it looks fun."

Then the staff and Zelphy-san turned around and looked at me with disbelieving expression. Zelphy-san covered her face with her left hand.

"Aa~, it might be good for you to participate. Lyle is my client after all, if I’m going to be forced to join then with him there……but listen here, what do you mean it looks fun huh? Looks fun you said! This isn’t a game you got that?"

I’m surprised hearing that.

From the talk of the ancestors, it sounded like something fun but…….

"I, I’m sorry."

I apologized even while being unable to really swallow it.

Zelphy-san tried to explain to me who am like that but, "No, doesn’t matter. It feels like it’ll be long" she gives up. "Before that" she said, telling everyone to head to the bathhouse first for now.

Certainly, we cannot calm down no matter what without cleaning up this dirtiness first. I and Zelphy-san planned to head to the meeting once more after getting refreshed.

.

──Novem, Aria, and Sophia, the three of them exited the bathhouse and breakup for the moment before meeting up again in a café with calming atmosphere.

They planned to have dinner after meeting up with Lyle, so Novem only ordered drink and killed time there.

When she looked at outside the window from her seat, people were walking by. She could see the figure of citizens pinching their nose seeing adventurers returning from outside and taking distance from them.

Soaked in sweat, mud, blood. Few people would approach such adventurer.

Originally, it was the norm for something like adventurer guild to be located near the city's entrance.

Looking at the whole of the city, Dalien's adventurer guild was placed at the edge of the city, but Dalien that continued to expand also caused the number of building around the adventurer guild to be increasing gradually.

Aria who was leaning on the table brought up a subject at Novem who was watching the scenery outside like that.

"That Lyle, is he trying to do something on his own again?"

Sophia drank juice with a straight posture and looking at the badly mannered Aria from the corner of her eye.

"Rather than that, can't you do something about your posture?"

When Aria stretched her back from the warning of the straight laced Sophia, Novem chuckled seeing the two of them.

(They have opened up more to each other compared to before.)

Novem felt that the distance between the two's heart had become closer since the problem between territories last time was resolved.

It wasn't awkward like before, they were becoming able to say what they wanted to say to the other.

"It seems so. I guess Lyle-sama is also someone with the blood of Walt House."

Then Sophia seemed to recall something and her expression turned complicated.

"I heard about it before. It seems that Walt House would be happy with dungeon's appearance. Even dungeon that normally would be a source of worry is nothing more than a place of skill test in front of the Bahnseim's strongest feudal lord noble……it's just a rumor right?"

Aria was doubtful in front of the uneasy Sophia.

"Lyle's house is that amazing? I've at least heard their name before but, there is also a Walt House among us capital noble, so, you know."

If the past was traced, the feudal lord noble Walt House originally became independent from the capital noble Walt House. The Walt House that had the lowest rank as capital noble could be considered as the main house.

Sophia explained to Aria.

"Should I call them amazing or out of place, anyway they are famous. You didn't hear the rumor about them at Centralle?"

Aria tilted her head.

"I know they are amazing but, from my view who came from the capital noble background, I only know that the branch house

countryside feudal lord is surpassing the main house at Centralle, that’s all. Is there some kind of famous anecdote about them?"

Then Novem took a sip of her drink and moistened her mouth, then her eyes shined.

And then, as though she had been waiting for it, she started talking eloquently.

"Speaking of their amazingness, Walt House has a lot of amazing anecdote since it was founded. After all, the ancestor of the feudal lord noble Walt House, Basil-sama was a dragon slayer who defeated a dragon singlehandedly. The second generation Crassel-sama was plain and didn’t stand out, but he was the person who solidified Walt House’s foundation. The one who was leading the soldiers who were trained by that second generation, was the third generation who is famous as the righteous general, Sleigh-sama. He charged an army of ten thousand with only several dozen troops and held them back in their track you know? Max-sama who became the fourth head fall behind the other heads in military achievement, but he was a person with magnificent skill in domestic affairs. Though it will take time to explain in detail so I will omit it. The fifth generation Fredericks-sama had disgraceful rumor about his love affair but, it was said that he was a demon in battlefield. The sixth generation Fiennes-sama possess both evil and good in him, he expanded the territory of Walt House and also played an active role in the war with the other country. The seventh generation, Lyle-sama’s grandfather, Brod-sama took the position as advisor to Bahnseim’s royal family and raised achievements in the chaotic state of Bahnseim at that time left and right──"

Aria and Sophia raised both their hands in a surrendering pose at Novem who wouldn’t stop. They shook their head and interrupted Novem’s explanation.

"Stop! Stop! We get it. Anyway, we get it that Lyle’s house is amazing!"

Sophia cleared her throat and changed the flow of the talk.

"E, even so he is late. It’s unthinkable that they will have discussion about the particulars so suddenly, I thought that it would be just confirming whether to participate or not."

Remembering that Lyle still hadn’t returned from the guild, Novem also tilted her head slightly with her hand supporting her cheek. She was also feeling that she still hadn’t spoken enough but, she also had no intention to forcefully continue.

"You’re right."

There was an anxiety inside Novem.

Lyle normally was ignorant of the world and had many hopeless side to him, but he showed that he was reliable at the crucial moment.

He would be motivated and solved any kind of problem. Novem too was thinking fondly of such attitude from Lyle, but she started to think whether this time that side of Lyle was coming out again.

(It will be good if nothing happens.)

Novem continued to wait while worrying whether Lyle was causing some kind of problem──.

.

[Don’t screw around!]

[Unforgivable. Something like this is absolutely unforgivable!]

[This isn’t allowed!]

[……]

[How can this be……]

[This is why this adventurer guild bunch can’t be trusted!]

The six ancestors were feeling indignation.

I participated in the discussion of dungeon subjugation inside the guild’s meeting room, but the result caused the six to be enraged.

Zelphy-san and Hawkins-san are looking at me in exasperation.

"Lyle, it’s obvious but, there is no way we can let you and others participate seeing that you are still in the middle of training."

The adventurer that was called to this place wasn’t just Zelphy-san.

There was one more veteran male adventurer who was similarly instructing other adventurers as instructor.

Apparently the other skilled adventurers are currently in the middle of subjugating other dungeon and cannot show themselves here.

I spoke as the representative of the ancestors’ opinion about my wish to participate but──.

"Lyle-kun, as expected I cannot allow that. Certainly the number of participant can be said to be insufficient. However, Lyle-kun and others are lacking experience. In Dalien there is no way we can let that kind of adventurer to participate."

I faltered in front of that reply which is typical for the earnest Hawkins-san. But, the ancestors doesn’t care about such thing.

The ancestors were in a bad mood because the dungeon subjugation that they were looking forward to was deprived from them.

The middle aged man with black hair, brown skin, and round stomach looked at me and laughed.

"The youngster trained by young miss Zelphy is really lively. It reminded me of the young miss in the past."

The man’s name is Dalel.

He is an adventurer that use spear and it seems he is classified as senior even among the veteran in Dalien. He has experience and track records of nearly twenty years and apparently even Zelphy-san cannot raise her head against him.

"Just shut up, this middle aged old man! I’m different from the past!"

He knows about Zelphy-san when she was still a rookie, so he should also know about her embarrassing past from that time. Because of that Zelphy-san must find it difficult to deal with this person.

Dalel-san folded his arms and looked at me while his left hand is touching his beard before nodding.

"I heard various rumors like “idiot noble son” or “womanizer”, but now that I’m looking at him directly like this, he doesn’t seem bad. Hawkins, how about letting him join?"

Hawkins-san made a troubled face.

"Dalel-san, as expected that’s──"

Zelphy-san scratched her hair roughly and then she pulled at my hand to get out from the meeting room.

"Come on, we’re going. Also, we won’t participate so just continue the talk without us."

"Please wait a second, Zelphy-san."

She pulled me roughly and then closed the meeting room’s door. After that Zelphy-san walked angrily through the corridor with longer steps than usual.

I timidly asked the reason why we cannot participate in the dungeon subjugation.

"Is it really no good no matter what?"

Zelphy-san’s opinion doesn’t change.

"No good. Looks like you’re getting cocky after finally becoming able to earn income properly though. Dungeon subjugation isn’t something that easy. You should challenge it after accumulating more experience. Only stupid idiot would challenge a dungeon in your current state."

[Eh!?]

The Second raised his voice in surprise at Zelphy-san’s opinion. The other ancestors also seemed unable to accept it.

Apparently from Zelphy-san’s view, the ancestors are all stupid idiot.

"Now listen. Each dungeon has its own characteristic. The number of monster inside can be extremely a lot or few. It can be excessively wide or cramped, there will be various other characteristics too. There isn’t anything like an absolute capture strategy for it. There is no way it can go well with rookies like all of you participating……no, perhaps Lyle might be able to do it I guess."

Her evaluation of me was unexpectedly rising in these few months.

Zelphy-san knows that I can use multiple Arts. But, apparently it’s no good with just that.

"The problem is the other three. Novem might still be fine, but the other two is really only at the level of better than amateur. What’s more there’ll be just five of us even with me included. The number isn’t enough."

Then the Third spoke in high spirits.

[Then it’ll be fine if we have the number isn’t it? Lyle, I have an idea.]

Hearing that, I suggested to Zelphy-san in order to convey the Third’s idea.

"What if I ask the party I’m acquainted with to increase the number? I think it’ll be enough if there are eight of us though."

However Zelphy-san’s opinion doesn’t change.

"No good is no good. Come on, we’re going home today and rest tomorrow. See ya."

After we got down to the second floor and arrived at the reception desk, Zelphy-san turned her back to me and waved her hand before walking away.

The anger of the ancestors inside the Jewel hasn't settled down yet it seems.

The Seventh raises his voice.

[Are they telling us to simply let this kind of good chance pass away!? Last time there were various problems so we gave up but, we won't give up this time! What's more, this will be the first campaign of dungeon subjugation for Lyle! They're getting in his way……this is why I hate adventurers.]

The Second also had the same opinion.

[That's right. Besides, it's better to experience this kind of thing, a skill test like this early.]

The Third is grumbling, perhaps he is vexed that his opinion was rejected.

[This is just strange. With the current party they can do well enough! Even Lyle has gone through "growth", he'll be able to use our Arts even more than before, and yet!]

The Jewel recording the Arts of the ancestors is an excellent tool that gives support teaching of the way to use the Arts to me the user.

At the same time, the ancestors were also resurrected inside the Jewel as memory, absorbing my mana and continuing to make a ruckus. This Jewel also happens to have a cursed tool aspect like that.

I sighed and then headed to the café where Novem is waiting. I'll join them and finish the dinner, then tomorrow what will I do…….

While thinking that, the Sixth laughed meaningfully.

[Now, everyone……how about we all calm down. After all the right to carry out dungeon subjugation belong to the feudal lord. The

guild is moving due to the request of that feudal lord, so we can only obey the guild's decision.]

When I'm thinking that the Sixth today is really docile, the other ancestors are also starting to laugh eerily.

Like the Third, his carefree voice sound more wicked than usual.

[You're right. It can't be helped now that the guild had told us that. Yep, let's give up. But you know……we weren't told not to rely on the feudal lord wasn't it?]

The Fifth muttered.

[The previous trouble between territories, we still haven't received the extra reward for that.]

The Seventh was also in a good mood.

[He worked people hard as he pleased. So we've to receive the compensation. Now then, Lyle……tomorrow will be fun.]

Apparently they want to directly request Ventra-san.

When I'm thinking that these people are a bit scary, the Second also felt the same with me.

[You guys, that's a bit scary you know?]

I can't help but agree with the Second's frank opinion.

Chapter 31 – Subjugation Preparation

I visited the mansion of the feudal lord Ventra Rodornia at Dalien early in the morning.

While feeling like an uninvited guest, I was guided into the mansion and waited for several minutes. Ventra-san appeared in front of me accompanied by his retainer.

"What's the matter Lyle-dono, to come here this early in the morning?"

Ventra-san is small and short, in a glance he looked like a kindhearted man. However, according to the ancestors, it seems his personality isn't like his appearance.

In fact, since coming to Dalien I have seen that kind of side from him several times. When he punished Aria-san's father and also when he sent me to the place that was devolving into dispute between territories were also like that.

I stood up and apologize for my impoliteness. After finishing the greeting, I create a smiling face as refreshing as possible.

Of course, it's the Sixth's instruction.

[That's right, smile. Listen Lyle, absolutely don't let your smile crumble.]

I started negotiating with Ventra-san just as the high spirited Sixth instructed.

"Actually I heard that a labyrinth appeared. It seems that it hasn't been long since it was born……I came here with a request to be allowed to join the subjugation by all means."

Ventra-san scratched his cheek with his fingertip hearing my request.

"That’s, I don’t know what to say. Unfortunately, I already made a request to the adventurer guild, so I cannot meddle with it. Originally I should dispatch my knights and soldiers for this, but they had only just returned and it will be too severe if I send them out again. And so, if you really want to join the subjugation, talking to the guild──"

Ventra-san said that he cannot meddle with the guild’s policy because he had entrusted this to them.

Certainly that’s not wrong but, there is no way he cannot meddle at all. After all, this land belongs to Ventra-san after all.

The Sixth sounded like he is having fun.

[He want to send us away because it’s troublesome.
But……unfortunate! Walt House is persistent just so you know!]

Is that a good thing? I whispered so inside my heart while showing a gesture as though I had just recalled something and opened my mouth.

"Even so, the dispatch to Bagan House and Maini House last time was really chilling. After all it would turn into battlefield if there was even a single misstep. Haha~, it’s really great that no mistake happened."

Ventra-san’s eyebrows twitched when I said that.

"The reward had been properly paid to you."

I continue talking smilingly with hand and body gestures.

"Bagan House is Ventra-san’s important dependent after all. We too were doing everything that we could for them. Can you tell me what happened after that?"

The retainer standing behind Ventra-san is glaring at me. But, I’m responding with a cheerful grin.

Honestly speaking, in my heart I want to go home right away.

Ventra-san sighed. And then, he sunk deeply into his sofa and looked at me.

"After that, perhaps they had changed their thinking slightly because a letter came. Well, even if it’s impossible to do it right away, they will surely do their best as my dependent in the future. Certainly, it was a result that surpassed my expectation."

I nodded with a smile, and then Ventra-san gestured with his hand to sit down, so I sat on the sofa opposite of him.

Ventra-san made a slightly difficult look. He opened his mouth even while worrying.

"And, what is Lyle-dono’s objective? Are you really thinking to participate in the dungeon subjugation, or you want extra reward……or perhaps, you have another thing in mind?"

Here I spoke honestly.

"No, I purely wish Ventra-san to give your recommendation for our participation in the dungeon subjugation. I don’t wish for anything more than that."

Ventra-san made a puzzled face.

"Are you fine with that? Certainly you can aim for great fortune in a single stroke through dungeon subjugation, but the factor of luck play a big role. I heard that there are also many dungeons which yielded result that didn’t worth the effort."

Then the ancestors made ruckus inside the Jewel.

[That’s a previous place where you can test your skill.]

[That’s right.]

[It’s great if it’s a dungeon where you hit jackpot though. It’ll become a good practice for you either way.]

[If you find a dungeon first thing to do is to subjugate it isn’t it?]

[You don’t get it. You don’t get it at all, this youngster!]

[If you are a man, then the first thing to do if there is a dungeon is to subjugate it. That’s how it is.]

The ancestors’ thinking is obviously different from Ventra-san.

I become curious and try asking.

"Ventra-san, you don’t feel happy when a dungeon is discovered?"

I have been thinking this from some time ago but, the ancestors who called me ignorant of the world, could it be that they themselves are actually far deviating from this world’s common sense? Then, Ventra-san covered his face with both hands.

"……I guess this means that Lyle-dono also come from Walt House."

"Eh?"

When I’m looking bewildered, Ventra-san explained it to me apathetically.

"For many feudal lords, something like dungeon is nothing but trouble. Certainly the treasure inside might be appealing, but it makes my head hurt when thinking just how much loss will result in order to obtain that. It’s not every time that we will be able to profit. And yet we also cannot just leave it alone. If a dungeon is born and discovered, it’s better to subjugate it rather than leaving it alone."

After its birth, the dungeon will rampage if it’s left alone, the monsters that are increasing too much inside will rush outside. Several thousands, tens of thousands monsters will be released.

When that happened, small villages or cities will be completely swallowed. In worse case even country will perish.

There is a rumor that sometimes, a living thing that isn’t a monster called divine beast will destroy a dungeon but……the reality of the

situation is that a dungeon cannot be left alone expecting that something like that will occur.

"Is that how it is?"

Ventra-san strongly nodded at my words.

"That's how it is! Well, I don't understand how other house is thinking in their mind but, people who are only thinking of dungeon as interesting are surely in the minority."

Hearing Ventra-san's words, I grasped the Jewel with my fingertips. The ancestors were speaking really evasively in respond.

[Tha, that's strange. At my era it would be like a bit of festival merrymaking……]

[It's not like it will be hard to subjugate it if the dungeon haven't been born for long.]

[If you want to earn income, it's not like you've to focus at just dungeon……]

[……So other house has this kind of thinking.]

[They are lacking in romance.]

[Exactly.]

……As I thought it seemed that Walt House was in the category of absurdity from the view point of the society in general.

Ventra-san continued history in front of me.

"Very well. Then, I will tal to the guild regarding your participation in the dungeon subjugation. But, I won't give any more help than that whatever happened later. After all this time it's really the guild that is mainly taking care of it."

I have a bit of doubt remaining about the sense of values of the ancestor, but for now I accomplished my objective, so I left Ventra-san's mansion.

.

At the sweet shop that is like a hideout for men, Ciel.

I called two of my acquaintances there and proposed cooperation with each other for subjugating a dungeon while eating cake.

The two men──the swordsman Rondo and the spearman Ralph who I became acquainted with in Dalien were eating cake while listening to me.

Rondo-san is an agreeable young man with refreshing atmosphere. He seems to be more interested to my talk rather than the cake. He washed down the sweetness inside his mouth with a slightly bitter tea and questioned me.

"I see. Certainly there're five people in Lyle's party. There're three people in mine. If we group up together there'll be eight people, that's quite the number. But, is it really possible? You said that the particulars still hasn't been decided yet, and if we suddenly participate in this……"

In contrast to the worried Rondo-san, Ralph-san who loves sweets is eating cake while giving favorable opinion at my proposal.

"That's nice. We won't be able to join with just us, but we can if we cooperate. Rondo, I want to join. I wanted to experience dungeon subjugation soon. Besides this kind of chance won't come again y'know."

They are a three-man party. Other than the two of them, there is also the magician named Rachel. They are acquaintance since coming to this Dalien.

Even after that, we would greet each other and chat when we met, and sometimes we would even sit on the same table like this. They are an adventurer party I'm on good relationship with.

Rondo-san is pondering for some time whole drinking tea. Although it's a party of just three people, Rondo-san is the leader.

It’s natural for Rondo-san to think about the future, whether they will participate or not.

I also expressed my opinion.

"Frankly, my biggest reason for doing this is simply wanting to participate this time rather than forcing ourselves to earn money. I think you can say that I want to obtain achievement of participating in dungeon subjugation."

Ralph-san spoke with a disappointed look.

"What’s with that, be more greedy here. Even you must have to work harder somewhat in order to provide for those cute girls around you."

I made a forced cough. I looked at Ralph-san with a fixed stare.

"Now see here, whether it’s Aria-san or Sophia-san, both of them isn’t my lover or anything like that. It’s not like I’m taking care of all their necessity."

Ralphy-san was grinning widely.

"That’s fine if you say so. Rondo, more importantly what’ll we do?"

Rondo-san who was thinking about my proposal looked up briefly to the ceiling and folded his arms before straightening his posture, looking at me.

"We’ll participate. But, we have several conditions."

"Naturally. So, what are the conditions?"

I also straightened myself and Rondo-san spoke several conditions.

"Thank you. First I want a firm promise that we’ll be able to participate. Without that it will be pointless even if we prepare. Also, I want to ask around what time the details will get decided. After that, simply allow us to participate too in real battle inside the dungeon as

much as possible during the subjugation. It will be frustrating if we're only participating as guard for the luggage."

When I nodded, Rondo-san smiled in relief.

"That's good. Well, we won't be able to plan when various things haven't even been decided yet, and depending on the situation we'll also have to consider about changing the plan. But, thank you for inviting us."

Raplh-san clenched his fist and made a guts pose.

"Yosh! With this we are also one step closer to our dream."

I looked at the two in puzzlement.

"Dream?"

Rondo-san looked embarrassed.

"Yeah, our dream, or perhaps our objective. We finally became adventurer. So we want to aim to become first class, and if possible we want to be successful in the free city Beim. I already told you that before but, that was my true feeling."

Beim──the big city that is said to be the home center of adventurer.

Ralph-san also agreed with Rondo-san.

"We will make achievement and gain fame. Right now we are losing even against Lyle but, one day we will gain more member and make a famous party."

Saying that, the two stood up from their seat.

"Now then, I'll tell about this talk to Rachel. Lyle-kun, I'll leave the confirmation of the particulars to you."

The two paid the bill and left the shop, then I ate the remaining cake. The Second talked about Rondo-san and Ralph-san.

[It’s good to have objective. Lyle, you’ve made really good friends.]

I slightly opened my mouth.

"Are they my friend?"

The Second laughed.

[That’s right. They are positive, with good skill and also future prospect. Perhaps even if you leave Dalien, you might be reunited with them again in the future.]

Hearing that I remembered. Rondo-san and his party are preparing everything necessary as adventurer in Dalien and then they would at the next place.

They would leave from Dalien.

When thinking that the parting is near, I remembered the First and my chest felt slightly pained. The Fourth seemed to notice and followed up.

[If you live then there will be a chance to meet them again someday. It’s not something to feel so down about.]

I nodded and ate the rest of the cake.

But, the word "friend" that the Second mentioned made me felt a bit embarrassed and happy.

.

Now then, I’m making use of today’s holiday to prepare various things but, I have to send the letter I received from Ventra-san to the guild.

"Ventra-san gave his permission, the problem of number is also resolved, is there anything left?"

I’m walking on a deserted street toward the guild while opening my mouth. A reply came back from inside the Jewel. It was the Third’s voice.

[Right now we’re lacking information, so I think you can just tell them that you’re participating. I think the news will be told to Zelphy too tomorrow. Haha~, I’m looking forward to it.]

I met with the local feudal lord and gathered comrades just for the sake of wanting to participate in dungeon subjugation. When Zelphy-san learns the situation tomorrow, won’t she get enraged?

I’m thinking that I don’t want to get scolded while walking, then I saw Novem and others shopping.

"Ah, Novem."

When I called out, Novem turned around and waved her hand energetically. Her hand is carrying various baggage. Aria-san and Sophia-san are the same.

Then, the Fourth’s atmosphere changed completely from before. He spoke with a cautious voice.

[Lyle! The three of them are approaching. It seems they are just returning from shopping. Are you prepared?]

Prepared? I held back myself from tilting my head and rolled the Jewel with my fingertips. Then the Fourth shrieked.

My mana increased from my “growth”, but it’ll still decrease rapidly when he yell like this so spare me.

[Preparation for praise! Praise the girls for their difference from the usual after finishing shopping! Listen well, you cannot let your guard down.]

While I’m thinking that it’s mysterious instead why he is this cautious, the Fifith laughed in ridicule toward the Fourth.

[Lyle, it’s the words of a hen-pecked husband. Listen to him.]

He told me to listen but, it sounded like he was making fun of him. Well, the Fifth rarely talked, so let's ask him about the circumstance of that someday.

When I looked at the three, they are dressed differently than usual when we went out to hunt monster. Novem isn't wearing her coat, and Aria-san is also the same, they are exposing a lot of skin.

It's only Sophia-san who isn't taking off her robe. In addition of her long skirt, she is wearing outfit that doesn't show skin. She isn't carrying her battle axe, so it feels like there is something lacking somehow. It's obvious that they're different from usual.

"Lyle-sama, you went out today since the morning. Have you finished your business?"

I shook my head at Novem's words.

"No, after this there are several places I'll go to……the three of you, are you shopping today?"

Aria-san lifted her baggage.

"We're buying daily necessities. Like clothes and other things. There is no way we're just buying things like weapon or armor or tool."

'H~m', the Fourth hummed in understanding with low voice.

[Lyle, first praise them for their look that is different from usual. That's enough for this time.]

The Fourth commented, his atmosphere seemed to say that not much could be expected from me.

I scratched my cheek while,

"You three somehow look different from usual, it's fresh. It might be because normally I can only look at the appearance of you three when going outside the city or after──finishing your bath, that might be the difference."

When I told them that somehow they look different from usual, Aria-san twirled on the spot.

"I, is that so? It was a bit expensive you know, so I hesitated to buy it. Sophia's clothes is also cute right?"

When I look at Sophia-san, she is fidgeting. She is wearing a long skirt and a shirt with some laces.

It's different from her usual robed figure but, this outfit right now is also conveying her serious atmosphere.

"I think it suits you."

"Tha, thank you very much!"

Sophia-san's face turned red and she answered shyly.

And then when I looked at Novem last, she was smiling.

……I'm stumped, I don't know what to praise about her.

Her outfit is like usual with her coat taken off. Is her shirt different, or perhaps her skirt……is it her shoes? But I feel like I've seen them before……I don't know.

The Fourth advised me.

[Her hairstyle. Today the root of her side tail is braided.]

"Your hairstyle today also looks nice. It's different from usual."

Novem made a small smile.

"Thank you very much. That's right, won't Lyle-sama come eating together with us? The time is just right."

It's a good time for lunch. But, I had just eaten cake.

"Sorry. I had just eaten cake with Rondo-san and Ralph-san not long ago."

Aria-san seemed disappointed.

"How nice, by cake you mean Ciel right? Right now we cannot enter there even if we want."

It’s a shop that is like a hideout for men. The male customers would be troubled if woman visited. Aria-san is bothered by that. She is unable to show her face there despite it’s a shop where she was working at before.

I thought that it would be better if I bought them a souvenir from there while pointing at the direction of the guild.

"I have a bit of business at the guild so I’m going there. All of you, take care."

I said that and left them, then I brought my feet toward the second floor of the guild.

.

──The three who parted from Lyle entered a reasonable restaurant for lunch after that.

There were many people because of the time. They finished their order amidst the bustling atmosphere and waited for the food to come.

Because Sophia was wearing clothing that exposed little of her skin, she was a bit sweaty. She wiped the sweat with handkerchief while speaking what was on her mind.

"What kind of business Lyle-dono could have at the guild today? If there is work to be done, won’t it be better for us to help too?"

Aria who was gazing at the inside of the restaurant turned her gaze to Novem.

"Did Novem hear anything? Is Lyle going there to complain because we aren’t allowed to participate in the dungeon subjugation……well, it didn’t seem like he would do that though."

Novem was sitting down with straight posture and friendly grin.

"There isn’t really any work that need to be doing, so I think it’s fine. And it seems we won’t be able to participate in the dungeon subjugation, but Lyle-sama didn’t look like he is that disappointed about it."

Hearing that Sophia placed her finger on her lips and slightly looked down in thought.

"It has been on my mind since some time ago but, does Lyle-sama want to participate in dungeon subjugation that much? No, it’s the truth that dungeon holds the possibility of obtaining great fortune, I have no intention to deny that but……it doesn’t look like Lyle-sama is that fixated about money……"

Aria argued at Sophia who wasn’t making herself quite clear.

"Is that so? At the territory problem last time too he asked something like, give us the right to challenge the dungeon first!, as reward. As expected, isn’t it because he’s a boy that he wants to participate? Or rather, I cannot understand the timing when Lyle is getting motivated. Usually he doesn’t seem motivated, but when he become serious like this, how should I say it, it’s kind of amazing somehow."

Aria was unable to collect what she wanted to say and she felt chagrined that she was unable to convey her thought to the surrounding.

Sophia pondered.

(Is it as I thought, he want to do dungeon subjugation too because it’s the tradition of Walt House, something like that? Even so, he doesn’t like full of motivation despite trying to participate in it forcefully……what a strange person.)

From Sophia’s eyes, Lyle was ignorant of the world.

Sophia was also ignorant of the world, but Lyle was even worse than her. She knew that he was amazing when he got serious, but she was questioning the big difference compared to the usual Lyle.

Novem told the thinking Sophia.

"Well, even leaving aside about Walt House and so on, dungeon subjugation is something important for adventurer, it's one of the big works an adventurer can accomplish. It's to the degree that you can call dungeon subjugation to be the synonym of adventure."

In many famous tales, the main character obtaining legendary weapon or tool from dungeon subjugation was the standard.

There were young adventurers with longing to that, Novem must want to say that Lyle wasn't an exception to that.

"It's not rare for young noble that cannot inherit their house to become adventurer and aim to get rich quick. Well, when speaking about getting rich quick most of the time it will be related to dungeon, so perhaps it can't be helped to want to challenge dungeon in order to climb to success."

But, many young adventurers did reckless thing chasing after that dream and lost their life in dungeon. That was also a fact.

That was why, in Dalien the guild managed the subjugation and chose the adventurers who could participate. Few other places that would the same like here in the subjugation.

Aria stretched herself.

"After becoming an adventurer it's unexpectedly plain. Things like subjugating monster that came out in the stories, or request with high difficult……in reality we cannot accept that kind of request even when they're available."

Lyle's party that had no achievement or trust from the guild was still youngster. Requests that were like adventure in the story wouldn't be assigned to them.

(No, unexpectedly it feels like we got many request like that.)

Sophia recalled the events since she met Lyle and she got the feeling that they unexpectedly had gone through some adventure that

young adventurer would imagine in their mind. But, even so Lyle’s evaluation in Dalien was questionable.

He got no nickname that sounded heroic, so certainly it could be said that he was plain.

Novem smiled slightly.

"It’s fine. If we follow Lyle-sama, surely──"

"Sorry to make you wait!"

There, the waiter brought the dishes they ordered──.

.

The next day.

What was waiting for us who gathered in the second floor of the guild was a call from Hawkins-san. We were led to the meeting room but, the atmosphere is bad.

Hawkins-san was looking troubled while pressing his head with his left hand. It made me felt apologetic to him.

As for Zelphy-san, she has been glaring at me this whole time.

Besides, there is also Rondo-san’s party too here. They are silently observing the situation.

Aria-san lightly tapped my elbow and demanded explanation from me.

"Wait, what’s with this atmosphere?"

"No, well……I was making a bit of necessary arrangement."

When I said that, Hawkins-san coughed.

"Ee~, there are things that I want to say but, first let me explain from the important matter. Lyle-kun’s party is approved to participate in the dungeon subjugation. At the same time, Rondo-san’s party is also allowed to participate in the shape of joining another party."

Sophia-san stared fixedly at me after hearing that. While Rondo-san and others are looking happy that their participation is decided.

"Don’t tell me, the business in the guild that Lyle-dono mentioned yesterday was……"

I averted my gaze while nodding.

"……I asked Ventra-san to put in some words for our participation, then I requested the cooperation of Rondo-san’s party before visiting the guild."

Novem is also looking at me in surprise. I feel bad for arranging this without telling them but, the inside of the Jewel is on the contrary with my feeling──.

[Yosh! With this we only need to the information later and prepare.]

[There is nothing impossible for us.]

[I wonder how much we’ll be able to earn.]

[It’ll be great if there isn’t any cute monster there……]

[For the start prepare food and weapon, there are a lot of thing to do!]

[However, we’ve participated in this before as a feudal lord, but there is no guarantee that the subjugation method of adventurer will be the same. Let’s confirm it to Zelphy thoroughly here. ……She doesn’t look enthusiastic though.]

Zelphy-san is trembling and glaring at me. It seems there is a need to ask her various things. Spare me from that.

Hawkins-san continued.

"There is additional information of the dungeon. As expected its scale is small. It appeared inside a forest with only one vast floor. For the type of monster, in the report it has been confirmed that there are goblin, orc, and several variety of insect type. It seems the change

inside dungeon is small. But, apparently there is frequent change and it’s necessary to be careful."

The dungeon’s scale──it doesn’t refer to the wideness but to the number of floor. A dungeon with more than ten floors whether it extended to above or underground would be called medium scale. It would be treated as large scale if the number of floor surpassed fifty. The floor of the dungeon this time is one. No matter how wide it is, it’s scale is judged as small.

Also, the change inside the dungeon mustn’t be forgotten. A dungeon will change its inside so that it will be harder for people to conquer. The dungeon this time has little change in route or room, but it frequently caused change so it’s necessary to pay attention.

Hawkins-san looked at the document while explaining in succession.

"This time the subjugation is completely under the control of the guild. Because of that, other than the rear support we’ll be also calling out to post exchange merchant too. Byron-san’s place has the guild license, so in case there is other post exchange merchant coming along, it’s not recommended to use their place too much. Well, many of the merchants are gathering in the other dungeon, so I don’t think there will be any more coming though."

Zelphy-san made a displeased face hearing that. Post exchange merchant──they are people who come along with adventurer, mercenary, or feudal lord’s army to do business within the camp. It seems that kind of merchant will gather even without the guild doing anything, but it seems right now those merchants are completely focusing on the other dungeon. Speaking of the scale, the other dungeon is larger and it seems it will take a lot of time.

"So old man Byron will take control there."

It seems Zelphy-san know the person. From her attitude, it feels like the person will be someone problematic.

Hawkins-san warned Zelphy-san.

"Remember that in the end it’s the guild that is in control. Also, this time I’ll participate as the guild staff representative."

Zelphy-san made a banter hearing that Hawkins-san will also participate.

"I think the scary faced boss is better suited as receptionist though. Well, that’s a relieving new to hear for us though. The guild too, I wonder what they are thinking to dispatch boss there."

Apparently Hawkins-san is being posted as receptionist in order to pressure the adventurer as a deterrence against them. Perhaps Hawkins-san himself is bothered about it, he said "I endeavored to be kind and polite though" with a shrug.

"You can purchase weapon and the like even at the site, but please pay attention to the prize. Make a thorough preparation beforehand. Also, regarding the treasure chest, the right to it will be given to the adventurer who obtained the chest. But, regarding the monster material and magic stone, everything will be purchased by the guild. In addition, regarding the treasure at the deepest room, a portion of it will belong to the guild──"

According to what I heard, it seems the price of magic stone and material will be beaten down to be cheaper than usual. They said that the reason is because of the special cost of the dungeon subjugation.

Ralph-san tilted his head.

"So you mean, the treasure will belong to the guy who find it, while everything else will be purchased cheaper than usual?"

Ralph-san looked dissatisfied. Hawkins-san explained.

"In exchange, the guild will take care of the rear support. You won’t be troubled for the matter of food and other miscellaneous affairs. Please understand that the lower price is to cover for that cost."

Because the guild will take care of the rear support, they also need compensation. Ralph-san fell into thought and nodded with understanding inside himself.

"Then, I'll continue the explanation. About the departure, it's planned to be in one week from now. It will take around two days to arrive at the site. The subjugation period is estimated to take around two weeks."

Rondo-san is surprised hearing it would take two weeks.

"That's a lot of time even though the scale of small isn't it?"

Zelphy-san explained to Rondo-san.

"Setting up the campsite after arriving, and then securing water, securing the safety of the surrounding, and so on. There will be a lot of thing to do. We don't know how much time within those two weeks will be taken by those matters."

It seems that we won't immediately enter inside the dungeon right after arriving.

"There is quite some time before we depart."

When I said that, Hawkins-san explained about that.

"Yes, actually there will be around fifty adventurers who will enter the dungeon, but the number of people acting as their rear support will be nearly two hundred until three hundred. Even one week is already us hurrying it."

I couldn't hide my surprise hearing that.

The Third is in admiration inside the Jewel.

[Hee, so they can gather that many people. Well, they can just gather people from among the adventurers after all. But, the rear support will be really substantial isn't it?]

The Seventh seems to be curious about that too.

[If it’s in our case, the number will be fewer than that.]

It seems there is difference between dungeon subjugation that is done by feudal lord and by guild.

Hawkins-san distributed some document to us.

"Then, we’ve prepared the summary of the detail in this document. Please confirm it."

After distributing the papers, Hawkins-san said that he has work and quickly left the meeting room.

Rachel-san called to Novem.

"Thanks for this, Novem. Because of all of you we can also join the dungeon subjugation."

"Ye, yes."

There is a reason why Novem is smiling wryly. That’s because she can see Zelphy-san approaching me smilingly. However, Zelphy-san’s smile doesn’t reach her eyes.

"Lyle, can you explain to me? I told you no already right?"

When I turn my gaze around looking for help, everyone exited from the meeting room. Novem is brought along by Aria-san and Sophia-san to outside the room.

Rachel-san too, she is pushing Novem’s back to get out of the room.

At the end she looked at me and said "Good luck" with a smile.

I asked for help to the ancestors inside the Jewel, but the six people isn’t in the state for that.

[I can’t wait!]

[I can’t wait!]

[Let’s earn as much as possible!]

[As long as there is no cute monster then it doesn’t matter.]

[If only there’ll be dragon at the deepest room]

[I wish there’ll be griffon at least.]

At the end everyone talked in unison──.

[I’m really looking forward to it!]

──Like that and made a ruckus.

As for me, I got scolded by Zelphy-san and at the end I was even ordered to treat her some food.

Chapter 32 – The Silver Weapon

It’s decided that we’ll participate in the dungeon subjugation, so we started preparing for it in a great hurry under Zelphy-san’s instruction.

I who went out shipping looked at the memo while checking if there is anything that I forgot to buy.

I walked on a street with many passerby while looking at the food supply inside a brown paper bag. There are a lot of foods with long preservation time like cheese and so on. I also bought various other things.

"The food should be prepared by the guild……"

Toward me who is complaining even while purchasing the items, the ancestors’ reaction is varied.

The Second said that I should obey Zelphy-san’s instruction.

[You should obey the opinion of someone experienced. Or rather, there are a lot of things that even we cannot make judgment about.]

Although the ancestors had experience subjugating dungeon from the position as feudal lord, this is their first time participating as adventurer.

Because they don’t know about adventurer’s style in this, they are obeying the instruction while observing the situation.

The Sixth seems to be irritated that we cannot gather people.

[It’s different from us who could gather people with a single order.]

It seems that with their position as a feudal lord, the ancestors could gather soldier and also personnel for rear support when they proclaimed their intention to subjugate a dungeon.

I also want more people, but I have no other people other than Rondo-san and his party who I can trust.

It was then, the Fifth was the only one expressing a different opinion.

[Setting that aside, shouldn't we test "that thing"? After all we haven't test it since coming back because of various matters. I want to at least judge whether it's usable or not before the dungeon subjugation.]

That thing──it's about the silver weapon that was left behind when the First vanished from inside the Jewel after finishing his role to entrust all his Arts to me, the great sword inside the room of round table.

The ornamental part of the Jewel was made from rare metal. I don't know what kind of metal was used and what kind of manufacturing process was done to it, but it seems the Jewel can become a weapon.

It's one of the things other than Art that the First left behind for me.

The Third agreed with the Fifth's opinion.

[Certainly that's important. Right now Lyle is using saber as weapon, so he is unable to deal with hard opponent. If he can use that great sword, then it feels like you won't have any problem with enemy to a certain level.]

I glanced at the saber hanging on my waist and fell into thought.

I thought several times about changing my weapon, but I was unable to decide no matter what. Besides, it's also a fact it's better to use the weapon you're most familiar with.

In fact, I can just use magic against opponent that is resistant to blade.

If it's the current me who has gone through "growth", I won't faint in the middle of battle. ……I want to believe that I won't.

The Fourth summarized the opinions.

[Then, perhaps it will be better to use this holiday rather than when going outside for work. Let’s invite Novem-chan and go outside.]

"Invite Novem?"

I don’t understand the reason of taking Novem alone while leaving Aria-san and Sophia-san behind. If Zelphy-san come along it’s also possible to receive various advice from her.

"Is it no good to test it while coming back from work?"

Then the Seventh sighed.

[Lyle, you aren’t quick on the uptake. We’re telling you to go out alone with Novem while you’re at it. You know, something like a picnic.]

It seems they are telling me to go out alone with just Novem. When I’m thinking whether there is a need to mind about such thing to that extent, the Fifth said to me──.

[Never mind that, just go. Every day you are acting together with her, but this and that is different. Let’s see, today’s weather is also good, so invite her right away.]

Urged by the ancestors, I finished the shopping and invited Novem to have an outing.

.

I returned to the inn, placed down the baggage, and invited Novem to go outside the city.

We purchased food and drink before going outside lightly equipped. We headed to a place with good scenery near Dalien, then we sat down under a tree there and talked.

"It’s unexpected, to think Lyle-sama would invite me."

My heart felt pained for some reason when I saw the happy looking Novem. There is no way I can say that actually it's because I was urged by the ancestors……

"I, is that so? The weather today is good, and I also had finished with my schedule so…"

While I'm covering up with a laugh, I could hear teasing voice from inside the Jewel. Starting from the Second in turn,

[Novem-chan looks really happy. Perhaps she was actually waiting for Lyle?]

[Is Lyle a type that won't feed the fish he has already caught?]

[Get stabbed, you damn enemy of woman.]

[……That kind of attitude isn't good at all.]

[Well, we should make him learn about this too bit by bit.]

[After all recently it feels like you are neglecting Novem while paying attention to Aria and Sophia.]

I wasn't particularly neglecting Novem. But, it's a fact that I wasn't really attentive to her because it was like we were together from morning to night everyday.

I'm reflecting inside my heart while listening to Novem talking.

"Come to think of it, how is it going recently? You know, like Aria-san and Sophia-san? Just some time ago various things happened, and it was awkward with them until recently……"

Until just recently, I couldn't converse properly with the two of them.

Especially in regard to Aria-san, i might have made her angry because she wouldn't even talk to me.

Recently she finally returned to usual, but sometimes I would feel there is distance between us.

Novem looked at my face and made a troubled expression.

Is there any problem that is that serious?

"Well, that's……as expected I also cannot defend Lyle-sama in this. I think it can't be helped that Aria-san was angry about that matter. Ah, but it's not like she hate Lyle-sama. Aria-san and also Sophia-san are aware of Lyle-sama."

I'm grateful even just knowing that I'm not hated.

It's tiring to work with such awkwardness present.

The Third spoke in exasperation.

[Lyle was in the wrong for taking the meaning of I don't mind even if I die in a literal sense after you told her the moon is beautiful. We also cannot defend you in regard to that.]

What was bad about it?

The ancestors won't tell me even when I asked them.

"That's good, I think? Well, as expected if I'm hated, then I will feel down, or something."

The people who I got close with after coming to Dalien. Getting hated by those people would feel painful for the current me.

Novem smiled.

Novem is dressed lighter and a bit stylish than usual. Her appearance feels fresh even though the difference is only slight than normal.

"There isn't really any problem among us. The three of us are getting along quite well. We went out together before this, we've also opened up to each other more compared to at the beginning."

It seems they have gotten along well with each other to the degree that they would go shopping together. I'm feeling relieved hearing that, but the Fifth spoke to me.

[Don’t just take the meaning of her words literally.]

The sentence was somewhat filled with actual feeling.

But, it’s a good thing that the three of them are getting along well, so I’m happy.

"I see. That’s great."

"Yes. That’s why, please don’t worry, Lyle-sama."

We keep chatting like that, or rather Novem asked me about the plan from here on while we are talking about various things. When the instructional period in Dalien is over, the plan of the future will be important whether I like it or not.

"Lyle-sama, will we stay for a while in Dalien for a while like this? We have some leeway monetarily, though I think with our current capability we will be able to manage even if we move to other place."

With the exception of area where extremely specialized skill would be necessary, they would be able to obtain considerable result everywhere they go with their current party members.

Dalien is a city that is kind to rookie adventurer. But, to put it another way, it’s also a lacking city for adventurer that is strong to a certain degree.

I looked up to the sky while answering.

"I still haven’t decided but, I’m thinking to leave Dalien when the instructional period is over. After all it looks like Ventra-san also doesn’t want us to be here too long."

From the view of Ventra-san, I am a troublesome person due to my status as the former heir of a house of count. He surely doesn’t want to keep me in reach forever.

Then Novem make a certain suggestion.

"In that case, I recommend going to the academy city next."

"Academy city? ……You mean Arumsaas?"

The academy city Arumsaas is a peculiar city under the rule of Bahnseim Kingdom. It doesn't have a feudal lord, in addition its greatest characteristic is that it's managing a dungeon.

As to be expected from a city that is called an academy city, an educational institution called the academy exists there.

"Eh? Are we going to enroll into the academy next?"

When I said that, Novem shook her head.

"No, as expected we don't have the leeway financially for that. I don't think it will be pointless, but enrolling and studying for a few years will be difficult for our financial."

Then why? While I'm thinking that, Novem told me various things.

"The academy is famous in Arumsaas but, but people also gathering there for the library, private school, dojo, and so on. There are also a lot of private school and dojo that are teaching the necessary skill for adventurer, so that place is just fine to learn something while challenging the dungeon there."

Here, the Third snapped at the word library.

[As expected the library is really appealing.]

The Seventh recalled something while explaining.

[It's unusual how it doesn't have a feudal lord but, that place should have a strange dungeon under its management too. There are a lot of scholars there, I heard that kind of people gathered there in the past and the city they created became the academy city.]

The Third who heard that said to me.

[Lyle! Let's go to Arumsaas! I believe that surely you will be able to learn a lot of thing there! If possible, let's also consider the possibility of staying there for a long period!]

This person, he recommended Arumsaas to me just because he likes book.

The Second is a bit exasperated.

[More importantly, isn’t it better to move to a city that is more severe situation than Dalien?]

A city that is more severe than Dalien, that means it will be a city where adventurer will have easier time to earn money.

I replied to Novem.

"I’ll think about it. But, Arumsaas huh……"

In my imagination, my personal impression of it is a city with many scholars, and many young noble coming there to study.

Even if we don’t choose it as our next destination, it might not be bad to stop by there someday to look around.

"Lyle-sama, come to think of it you have one other business isn’t it?"

I suddenly remembered from Novem’s words. I stood up and tightly grasped the Jewel. I was too relaxed that I forgot my objective at first.

"That’s right. I planned to test this thing."

Novem is looking affectionately at the Jewel I held. And then, she told me various things.

"I heard that among the rare metals there is a metal that can change shape. The ornamental part of the “Gem” that Lyle-sama has might be created from that kind of metal too."

"Is that so? I heard that the material was presented from Forxus House though."

The Seventh said something like that. He said that he asked for ornament to be created for the Gem that was the heirloom of Walt House using the rare metal presented from Forxus House.

Novem's expression turned troubled.

"I didn't know until that far. My apologies."

It seems to be a matter of a really long time ago, so perhaps it can't be helped that she doesn't know about it.

"I think it will go fine but……"

Saying that, I walked out from under the tree and took distance from Novem. I don't understand what'll happen, so I took some distance just in case.

I grasp the Jewel with my right hand and then imagine the great sword in my mind.

When I become able to imagine the great sword that looks like a zanbatou the First left behind for me, I felt the Jewel turning hot.

The chain gets off from my neck, wrap around my right hand, and the weight of the necklace is gradually getting heavier. When I thrust my right hand in front of me, the silver metal wriggles and changes shape.

[This is, really……]

The metal amount of the necklace and the silver metal forming the shape of a great sword in front of me──they're clearly different, even that single fact is surprising.

And then after a while, the figure of a great sword with the Jewel embedded in it appeared. Many parts of it are resembling the great sword that the First used. It was exactly the same with the great sword floating inside the room of round table of the Jewel.

I couldn't lift it up with one hand. My left hand reached out and I lifted the great sword with both hands.

I looked up at the great sword that is shining from the sunlight hitting it. The great sword that is as tall as me looked really reliable.

"Amazing. Besides it feels familiar to my hand……hm?"

I immediately noticed an abnormality.

"Wait a second, wait a second!"

I'm tightly grasping the handle with both hands, but the great sword is starting to shake by itself. It's getting heavier as though it's rampaging, and then it's sucking up mana from me.

The Second panicked.

[Oi, what's this──]

The Third calmly instructed me.

[Lyle, dispel it right away. The situation is strange──tsu]

The great sword was trying to absorb all the magic power that I have. The voices of the ancestors are cut off.

When I was about to lower down the sword tip to the ground from being unable to endure the weight and shaking, the great sword that sucked my mana ignored me and slammed onto the ground powerfully.

The ground is gouged with terrible sound, the soil whirled up, and the ground felt shaking from the impact. I get showered with soil and become covered with mud, but I have no composure to be bothered by such thing.

"Lyle-sama!"

I could hear Novem's voice calling at me from afar, but at that time the great sword return to the form of Jewel and I collapsed on top of the gouged ground.

I cannot hear the voices of the ancestors from inside the Jewel.

The silver part that is wrapped around my right hand. And then the Jewel settled on my palm. I was watching them inside my thinning consciousness. It seemed I fainted from running out of mana after so long.

"……It absorbed all the mana I had."

The great sword that wouldn't listen to what I told it at all was a weapon that was hard to handle even if it was powerful.

.

Evening.

When I came to myself, I was sleeping on Novem's lap.

"Are you alright, Lyle-sama?"

The worried Novem is stroking my forehead. I'm sweaty and terribly tired. But, it's not to the degree of being unable to stand up.

"……How long I fainted?"

The surrounding is getting dyed in orange. It felt like quite some time has passed. Novem smiled in relieve while answering.

"I think it's around three hours."

So I lost consciousness for three hours. It seemed that Novem was looking after me the whole time.

I'm feeling guilty to her.

"I was the one who invited you, and yet I made you looked after me……sorry"

When I said that, Novem shook her head. Her brown hair that looked shiny was hit by the orange light and gave me a different impression from normal.

"No, I also had fun. But, perhaps it's better to not use that weapon too much. From what I saw, it looked like it was running wild."

The great sword felt fitting in my hand, and it also had destructive power. However, it’s a troublesome weapon that is hard to handle and sucked all the mana I had.

I closed my eyes.

The problematic sword and the First’s figure overlapped with each other in my mind.

"It will make it easier if I can master its use though. ……I’ll try training with it for a while."

Perhaps because my mana still haven’t fully recovered, I couldn’t hear the voices of the ancestors from inside the Jewel.

Novem is looking worried.

"I don’t want Lyle-sama to force yourself too much though."

I slowly lifted my upper body.

"But, I also cannot stay the same like this."

At first I only thought that I obtained a convenient weapon, but the silver great sword was greatly problematic no matter how I looked at it. With my current self, I’ll definitely faint after using it.

I somehow stood up and took a deep breath.

I look at the place that was gouged by the great sword’s attack and nod.

"It’s no good unless I’m practicing in further place I guess."

It seems the strength of one attack is abnormally powerful, a crater of several meter was created there. My legs are still staggering, so Novem stand up and support me.

"Are you alright? Won’t it be better to rest a bit more?"

I shook my head.

"No, it’s fine. I’ll rest slowly after returning. I have to take a bath too."

My whole body is dirty. When I lightly brushed my clothes, sand are falling to the ground.

I’m getting supported by Novem while sighing and muttering in my heart.

Nothing is going well.

.

──The city of Dalien is bustling with the story of the newly born dungeon.

In the bar that was used by adventurers, the young adventurers who were dreaming to get rich quick were making ruckus joyfully because they could participate in the dungeon subjugation.

Zelphy was staring at that situation with a bitter thought.

"They’re really carefree. Even though I’m having a headache because of the unexpected participation."

Zelphy who gulped down her alcohol banged the cup on the table. Anyone who saw her could clearly see that she was in a bad mood. No one was approaching her.

But, that was only until a single middle aged adventurer who didn’t read the atmosphere came.

"What’s with you, ain’t that fine? The young should at least go that far. Those who are acting clever will decide their own limitation by themselves and won’t grow."

The man, Dalel was laughing while saying that some recklessness was necessary. He approached Zelphy and drank alcohol together.

"Or is there any problem? He looks really capable to me though."

It seemed that Dalel saw Lyle and got the impression that he was a capable person. That in itself was something that Zelphy was happy about.

After all the adventurer he trained was recognized.

"He also got a lot of unreliable side to him though. And yet, he is a guy who is resolved when it’s time, so surely he got some kind of thinking for the matter this time too. But you know, I said it’s still too early."

Zelphy wasn’t opposing the participation in the dungeon subjugation because she wanted to be mean.

The problem was, there was little information about a dungeon that hadn’t been born for long, which increased the danger. Besides, it also had a lot of difference from the normal monster subjugation. There was also a necessity to act jointly with other party. Lyle was overwhelmingly lacking in experience regarding those things.

Dalel largely opened his mouth and laughed.

"The young miss Zelphy was also someone who did a lot of reckless things in the past though. Haha~, it’s nostalgic."

Dalel was already a veteran adventurer when Zelphy was still a rookie. At that time he possessed strength that it wouldn’t be strange even if he moved to other city.

However, Dalel didn’t leave from Dalien.

"You’re like an old man talking about the past."

When Zelphy made fun of him, Dalel gulped down his alcohol. And then he laughed again.

"That’s true. My sons too have become able to support themselves and have their own family. I also have a grandson too already, I too am an old geezer now."

Zelphy’s expression turned complicated hearing that.

(You got a grandson already when you're still 40? Even though I've only finally get married.)

Zelphy asked Dalel in order to change the topic.

"How long that kind of old geezer will continue to work? Even your body must have already nearing its limit right now."

Dalel talked to Zelphy inside the noisy bar that was bustling with adventurer.

"As expected even my earning is getting bad. You know, I talked to the guild some time ago about retiring, but then they asked me if I want to become an instructor. I instructed several group of youngsters but, even doing that is getting damn hard now. That's why, I'm going to retire this time."

Dalel spoke of retirement with a grin. Zelphy ordered more alcohol and asked the continuation.

"What's your plan after that? You're planning to kick back and relax in your old age?"

"Yeah, the guys I'm training right now will finish taking lesson from me after the dungeon subjugation this time. That'll be the end. When I retire, I'm thinking of becoming soldier. An offer from the feudal lord-sam came through the guild. It will be days of guarding the gate or in a post somewhere."

An adventurer with experience as abundant as Dalel was rare, his behavior and reputation were also good so the feudal lord planned to hire him as soldier.

Zelphy was a bit relieved hearing that.

After all in the world, adventurer who retired and became broke wasn't few.

"I see. Good for you."

When she was considering treating him alcohol for celebration, Dalel asked Zelphy.

"By the way missy, the youngsters at your place and my youngsters……who do you think are better?"

Hearing Dalel's teasing words, Lyle and his party floated in Zelphy's mind and she immediately answered.

"Mine I guess. They're lacking experience but, they're overflowing with talent that compensate enough and then some for that. There are two magicians, and one of them specializes in it, while the other is a swordsman. The other two have Art. Everyone of them is excellent."

Lyle and others who only some time ago were getting teary eyed from cleaning gutter or dismantling monster. However, recently they had become appropriate looking as adventurer.

Dalel was grinning.

"What?"

"No, at my place it's not clear whether those guys got talent or not. But you know, I think those guys are really capable. Well, perhaps I'm also biased causes I'm the one training them until now. How about it? Do you want to bet which party will obtain better result in the next dungeon subjugation?"

Zelphy made a displeased face at Dalel's suggestion.

(I never won any bet against this guy huh.)

Since the past, Zelphy had never won in any bet against Dalel. She recalled that, but then she noticed that there was something that made her convinced that she would win against Dalel who was suggesting this.

(Well, it might be better for Lyle and the others to get a bit of painful experience. Even if I lose it's not bad if I think of it as me treating him to commemorate his retirement.)

"That’s fine, that bet……I’ll take it."

Like this, the competition between the adventurer party that Dalel trained and Lyle’s group was decided in the corner of the noisy bar──.

Chapter 33 – Dungeon Subjugation Start

Multiple wagons and carts formed a line, with a great of number of people moving.

The sun is blazing down. The air is humid. The horse and their poop are stinky.

We were able to advance through the highway until midway, but it's not like the dungeon was born while giving consideration to people's convenience…….

"Heave, ho-!"

I, Rondo-san, and Ralph-san are pushing from behind a wagon that got its wheel stuck in order to move it.

The grassland that is hard to walk on has bright green grass growing until our waist.

"The weed entangled the wheel."

Rondo-san wiped his sweat and checked whether the wheel is broken or not. He cut the entangling weed with a short sword. When I look around, there are a lot of wagons having the same problem.

When I look around in order to be vigilant, Sophia-san came bringing us drink. She is also distributing the water to Rondo-san and Ralph-san.

"Here."

"Thank you."

After I accept it and drink it all at once, I felt slightly eased.

The Second's exasperated voice comes from inside the Jewel.

[There should be better way like having the advance party clearing away the grass or something.]

The Fourth expressed a different opinion.

[Perhaps they thought that a path would be opened anyway while the group is going there? Well, certainly the efficiency is bad like this.]

It’s possible to search for a path that is easy to be passed using my Arts. However, there are also people and horse carts around us, so we cannot leave them and take a different route by ourselves.

The goods that we’ll be using are loaded in the horse cart that we rented. Water, food, change of clothes, and then the necessary tools, the spare weapons, etc.

The Fifth was irritated since some time ago.

[Isn’t the planning too bad? Just what are the people who arrived ahead are doing? I wish they will think about the people coming after them a bit more.]

I heard that an adventurer party are going ahead in order to investigate.

The group doesn’t advance. Zelphy-san who headed to the leading group in order to check the situation is returning and waving her hand.

"We’re resting for a while. Several of the horse carts at the lead became unusable. It seems slimes latched on the horse causing it to go wild. Aah, it’s the worst."

At the schedule we should be arriving at the afternoon today, but right now it’s already afternoon.

"Won’t it be better if we sent some people ahead to check which path is easier to go through?"

Zelphy-san also agrees with my opinion. She agreed but, she snorted.

"This is the result of moving with the guidance of those guys' direction. Good grief, I wish they didn't use amateur for this."

Ralph-san who was sitting on the nearby boulder asked Zelphy-san.

"What is the guys who arrived at the dungeon ahead of us doing?"

Zelphy-san received water from Sophia-san and drank it all at once before answering while wiping her mouth.

"Those guys are adventurer party that was dispatched from Centralle. They have various excellent magic tools for investigating, but what they are doing is basically only dungeon investigation, not chores."

The adventurers who came from Centralle are special adventurers who have unique skill. It seems they came here because of the request of the guild here.

There is no way they would do any chores, is what they said.

The Seventh snorted.

[Hmph, as expected the like of adventurer is useless.]

The Third also of the same opinion.

[The prejudice is strong in the Seventh's case but, I think I also feel the same. I wish they won't think that job like creating a path is useless and do it properly.]

The Fourth laughed a little.

[Well, if you look at the document, there are a lot of parts that look pointless even though they will be indispensable on the site. In everything, the best result doesn't always mean to be the most optimum result.]

The best result isn't the most optimum. Those words made me wanted to tilt my head. But rather than that, when will be the unmoving group start moving again……that's what is in my mind.

The horse cart following behind us is really large and splendid. People are coming down from there.

"What?"

Rondo-san is surprised. Ralph-san is also surprised, and me too.

The people coming down are stretching and rotating their shoulders as they please. What is surprising is that all of them are female, and their appearance isn't like adventurer.

They are wearing showy dress. In addition, the chest part of their clothes is opened, and there are also women among them wearing dress with slit that showed their thigh.

While we are watching in surprise, one more person──it's a man this time, an old man is coming down. The thin old man wearing a hat addressed me with a soft expression.

"Pardon me. The girls are bored. I told them to go outside to relax some. By the way, is there still no sign of resuming our journey?"

I answered the old man with a flustered state.

"Eh!? No, yes. It seems the horse cart at the front become unusable, so it doesn't look like we'll move for a while."

The old man took off his hat and pressed on his forehead.

"That's troubling……. Oops, I haven't introduced myself. I am Byron. I'm coming along with this group as a post exchange merchant. If you have any business please talk to me. I have anything from food, weapon, alcohol, and many other things prepared."

The old man who introduced himself as Byron pointed with his thumb at the horse cart──no, the prostitutes behind him.

The Sixth laughed.

[Hoo, this is also quite good……]

The Fifth was exasperated.

[This guy is really…. Lyle, be careful. After all the merchandise that this kind of merchant is handling will be more expensive than normal. And the increase won't be limited to just a fourth or a third, there are even some people who will double the price.]

A rip-off? While I'm thinking that, Zelphy-san seemed to notice what's going on here.

"You bastard, this shitty geezer Byron!"

I'm shocked hearing Zelphy-san hurling out such foul-mouthed insult, but Byron-jiisan was laughing.

"What, isn't this Zelphy. With you being here, does that mean these young people are trained by you?"

Zelphy-san was approaching here with large stride. Her gaze ran around the relaxing prostitutes and Byron-jiisan before she formed a twitching smile.

"Are you promoting your ware while also taking a rest? You're really hard at work."

"Daily effort is important for a merchant like me. Besides dispersing stress is important for the young people."

The Sixth was agreeing with the words of Byron-jiisan while laughing.

[Exactly! That's an important matter.]

Hearing that, the Fifth and the Seventh are──.

[Tsk!]

[It's really irritating.]

The Sixth……did he have some kind of problem in regard to woman relations? Well, certainly he is the one who looked like the type to play around the most among the ancestors.

While thinking of asking him about it someday, Zelphy-san called at Novem and others.

Novem, Aria-san, Sophia-san, Rachel-san──the four of them lined up and made shooing away gesture at Byron-jiisan.

"Our group don’t need anything like that as you can see."

Byron-jiisan looked at the four and laughed.

"Excuse my rudeness then. But, I also have other merchandise. Come talk to me if you feel like it."

Byron-jiisan waved his hand and headed toward another group of horse cart. The prostitutes also moved following Byron-jiisan.

It seemed his intention was really to promote his wares.

"How surprising."

"Really."

When Rondo-san and Ralph-san said that, Rachel-san’s cheeks twitched.

"Despite that the two of you looked like you were going to bite at the offer though?"

When the two started to make excuse to Rachel-san, Zelphy-san cautioned us.

"Think really carefully when buying various things at the post exchange merchant’s place. It’s the norm for their price to be fairly expensive. Depending on the situation the price can possibly be doubled or tripled. Be careful so that the money you earned don’t get sucked by them."

The ancestors also said the same thing, so surely it’s not wrong.

Although, there won’t be any nearby place where we can buy items in a dangerous place. If we are going to make use of such service we won’t have any other choice except Byron-jiisan’s place.

Sophia-san seems unable to swallow the current situation. She asked to Aria-san.

"Say, the women just now……"

Aria-san answered naturally.

"They’re prostitute. Rather, it’s amazing that their business spirit makes them comes this far."

Hearing the word prostitute, Sophai-san recalled the conversation just now and looked my way. She become red until her ear and her mouth is opening and closing.

"Do, don’t tell me, Lyle-dono will also use their service!?"

The Third answered that question of Sophia-san even though there was no way she could listen.

[Too bad! Lyle don’t have that kind of guts.]

Certainly I won’t make use of such service but, it feels somewhat irritating hearing it got said like that.

"I’ve never used that kind of service."

Sophia-san is relieved hearing that. I wonder why?

Novem smiled with a troubled look, and then she said while looking around.

"It looks like we will start moving soon. Everyone, let’s prepare."

The group at the front started moving. We finished our break and resumed moving.

.

Evening.

We who arrived at the destination although it was late started preparing the camping ground.

We raised the tent, checked the luggage and unloaded them down, and then had dinner.

The meal during the dungeon subjugation including during the travel was taken care of by the cooks that the guild hired.

But, bluntly speaking, the content of the dish was terrible.

It was only a soup of vegetable and bean, and hard bread.

There would be no end to it if we complained, even so there is no other way to call it except terrible. And above all else, the amount was little.

"It feels insufficient."

When I complained, Zelphy-san glared at me.

"That’s why I told you to buy various things. More importantly, don’t you hold grudge at the cooks. Even they normally would cook more delicious dish. It become like this because they’re cooking in this kind of environment and without any decent ingredients."

When I looked around, there is only grass, rocks lying on the ground, and a small forest nearby. There isn’t any village, and the watering place is also far away.

Rondo-san’s shoulders dropped.

"I heard that the nearest river is several kilometers away but, it seems the actual distance is five or six kilometer. It will be difficult even just to fetch water."

Zelphy-san explained apathetically.

"If there is a watering place nearby and the area look livable, then the events will naturally flow for a reclamation to be carried out here even after we finished the dungeon subjugation. But, in case of a place that isn’t suitable for living like this, everyone will move out after the dungeon subjugation and that’ll be the end of it."

However, in the Second’s opinion.

[……I got the feeling that there’ll be watering place if you enter deep into the forest but, it’s also troublesome to search and check if it’ll be usable.]

Well, even if there is such place, it’s not my job to draw water.

That kind of chore is the responsibility of the adventurers who are hired as rear support. It seems the adventurers who will challenge the dungeon won’t need to do any chores.

"Now then, I’ll explain about tomorrow. Tomorrow we’ll receive report from the investigation team before starting the dungeon subjugation for real. After that──"

I listened to Zelphy-san’s explanation and questioned whether the dungeon won’t get stimulated by doing such thing.

.

The next day.

We welcomed the first day of the dungeon subjugation.

After confirming the detailed information of the dungeon, we decided our role and standby at the entrance of the dungeon.

What is waiting for the nearly forty adventurers in front of the dungeon, are monsters.

A trap was set up, and then a commotion was raised near the entrance to lure the monsters. Like that when they came out──.

"They’re coming!"

The loud voice of an adventurer whose name I don’t even know served as the trigger. Novem held her staff and started preparing her magic. Rachel-san also did the same.

The remaining members readied their weapon and waited at standby. From the entrance of the dungeon──trees entangling unnaturally with each other to for the shape of a gate──five adventurers rushed out.

Right after that, goblins, orcs, and then insect type monsters are coming out in swarm.

The adventurers nocking their arrow and the magicians preparing their magic simultaneously launched their attack at that timing, blowing away the monsters.

It seems there is no surviving monster, so we relaxed our shoulder.

"……So we're repeating this from the morning."

Yes, this action has been repeated several times since the morning, defeating a lot of monsters. This is done to not stimulate the dungeon, and to blow away the monsters all at once──certainly the monsters inside the dungeon are decreasing, but I'm tilting my head wondering if this is alright.

Inside the Jewel.

The Fifth saw this scene and,

[The subjugation method itself hasn't really changed huh.]

He muttered such thing.

When I looked behind, an adventurer wearing an over the top robe made from fine quality cloth that has gems attached on it is pointing at something and giving instruction.

The adventurer who listened to it came this way and conveyed the instruction.

"It's over. With this the number of monster inside the dungeon is reduced. The dungeon subjugation will start for real tomorrow. Also, except for some party, the rest will move immediately to monster subjugation in order to secure the safety of this vicinity."

At the first day, it seems the subjugation of the monsters at the vicinity is also our job.

There are also adventurers working the guard duty around the campsite. But, in the end they only have guard duty, they don’t want to move too far from the campsite.

"Somehow, it’s different from my imagination."

Rondo-san also smiled wryly at my words.

"Well, thanks to that the monster inside the dungeon decreased. It’s efficient. Even so, all the material and magic stone here are taken by the guild huh."

We were fighting more than a hundred monsters since the morning. The result from that is all taken away by the guild. Well, it’s unclear who defeat what monster and it would be absurd if a quarrel occurred when deciding everyone’s share, so perhaps it’s better like this.

Zelphy-san sheathed her sword and put her shield on her back before giving us instruction.

"Come on, let’s go quickly to the place assigned to us. Lyle, you’re searching the monster."

I used Arts hearing that. The Jewel felt slightly hot.

The Fifth’s Art, Map.

The Sixth’s Art, Search.

The two Arts showed me the map of the surrounding in my mind, with red, blue, and yellow light dots crawling on it.

Blue is ally, red is enemy──yellow is neutral.

"This way. The number is……16 in total."

Aria-san and Sophia-san are in charge of the baggage in the tent. Because of that, the lineup right now is me, Zelphy-san, Novem, and Rondo-san’s party.

Ralph-san looked at me.

"Lyle’s Art is really convenient. Hey, what can it do?"

Then Rachel-san lightly hit Ralph-san with her staff.

"Ralph, that’s a breach of manner. Don’t carelessly ask about other person’s Art."

"I get it."

Rondo-san apologized to me. I smiled wryly while telling him I don’t mind.

Like that we started moving, then in the middle we found the party that Dalel-san is included in.

The leader, a male adventurer has purple hair that is slightly curly. His body is wrapped in leather armor and he carried a metal shield.

The fighting style using a sword and a shield is the same like Zelphy-san. The metal shield is drawn with a crest of sword with feather growing from it.

Dalel-san waved his hand.

"You guys do your best."

We also waved back, but the adventurers who are acting together with Dalel-san glared at us when they looked our way for some reason.

"What’s with those guys?"

Ralph-san said that in wonder. Then Zelphy-san opened her mouth.

"Oops, I forgot to tell you but, actually we are betting with each other. It’s a bet of who can earn more in the dungeon subjugation this time. It’s a competition with the adventurer party that Dalel trained so you guys do your best."

I’m troubled at how to react from suddenly getting told that.

"Err, I don’t know what to do even if you told me that so suddenly."

Setting aside the perplexed me, the Sixth laughed inside the Jewel.

[It’s fine isn’t it. It’s fun if you have someone to compete with. Putting that aside, tomorrow the dungeon subjugation will start for real huh.]

The Fifth has low tension like usual.

[Seems so. Well, let’s check the situation first. It’s also not interesting to suddenly teach the right answer. And there is also the adventurer’s style to consider.]

The Second seemed to be of the same opinion but,

[Before that they’re still not used to the dungeon. Lyle, it will be harsh at the beginning. Prepare yourself.]

What should I be careful with?

Before I could ask, we found a group of goblin so we immediately prepared for battle.

.

──The adventurers that Dalel trained.

They introduced themselves with party name of Sword Wings. The party name gave the image of sword and wings, but in reality the party leader Rex and a single vanguard warrior were the only one using sword.

Other than Rex, there were four warriors serving as the vanguard. At the rear were one magician and two people with light equipment. And the last one was a supporter.

Including Dalel the party had ten members, it was classified as a large party in Dalien. They had steadily continuing their activity in Dalien and the party grew this big after several years.

They hired Dalel as instructor as a part of their preparation to depart from Dalien.

For them, this dungeon subjugation was convenient for obtaining fund for their activity.

They were thankful they could participate but, they couldn’t feel honestly happy because there was an opponent that they couldn’t help but felt conscious to.

"Dalel-san, it’s the party just now isn’t it?"

Dalel laughed when Rex asked in confirmation.

"Yeah, that’s right. In my opinion, those guys are really capable. You guys need to work hard too."

They heard from Dalel that he used them as betting subject, but Rex and others never even imagined that the opponent they would compete with would be the “Womanizer” Lyle.

For Rex and others who had been working as adventurer steadily and diligently until now, an existence like Lyle was an object of envy.

He was able to obtain instruction from a veteran right after becoming an adventurer, and when they noticed he had subjugated a bandit group, and even received a direct request from the feudal lord, becoming like a celebrity.

From the view of Rex and others, they couldn’t help but think that it was unfair.

"You believe that we will lose against those guys?"

Dalel laughed while responding to Rex’s thorny words.

"I believe that in this world there isn’t anything like absolute chance of victory. That’s why it become a bet, and above all else they are the bunch that missy Zelphy trained. You guys might lose if you let your guard down."

Rex gritted his teeth.

(You said we’re going to lose against that kind of guy……)

The rumor about Lyle’s group was famous in Dalien. They heard that Lyle was keeping several beautiful girls at his side. Even just that fact was irritating for a party that consisted of only man.

"……We absolutely won’t lose."

Rex renewed his determination. Dalel laughed while tapping his shoulder.

"That’s the spirit! Don’t worry, you guys won’t lose if you do it like usual. Be confident."

The members of Sword Wings glared at Lyle’s group that was moving to the distance. In contrast with Lyle’s feeling, this side was burning with sense of rivalry──.

.

Inside the tent that the guild staffs used.

Several staffs were placed there. They were in charge of the reception desk which was different from usual.

They brought the guild card of the participating adventurers──the second guild card that was entrusted to the guild, and lined them up on a display board.

A map of the dungeon was drawn on the paper above the simple working table. The confirmation of where the adventurers would go inside the dungeon was being done. If it looked like the adventurers would be concentrated to one area, a different area would be recommended to disperse the participants.

Inside the small tent was packed to the brim from early in the morning.

"There’re a lot of people."

The Second looked fed-up with the way the guild was doing thing.

[the efficiency is bad as expected. Well, adventurer has to earn money for themselves, so this might be inevitable but……]

A feudal lord could just give order and that would be the end of it, but in the case of adventurers, it’s necessary to make adjustment depending on their opinions which takes time. It seems he is displeased with that.

Inside the tent, I saw Hawkins-san talking with the extravagantly dressed adventurer from yesterday. He is the adventurer that was dispatched from Centralle.

They are looking at documents and checked various things.

"Then, the changed spots are here, and here is it?"

"Yeah, that’s right. Also, regarding the deepest room, it’s too far and I cannot grasp any response from there. My bad but, tell the adventurers entering inside for the subjugation to search for it."

Hawkins-san filled the spots where a change happened at the map on the working table.

Looking at that map, the Fifth asserted.

[It has become convenient now. Rather than searching for a guy with an Art suited for investigation, you can just buy an expensive tool that can investigate until this far.]

But, it’s inferior compared to the information that can be obtained from the Fifth’s Art.

Without pause Hawkins-san started with his next work busily. The reception is being done by a single woman.

The blond haired and blue eyed receptionist who is the most popular in Dalien’s adventurer guild, Santoa Maillet. Although, rather than being the most popular, should I say that this person is the only girl of the appropriate age.

"E~rr, then your group will be in this area~"

She is doing her job leisurely but, knowing how she is normally I feel really uneasy. As a receptionist, she would take a look at the other side and butter them up, she will also make mistake with paperwork and other thing without any guilt.

I'm feeling amazed how she can stay as receptionist like that, but is it because she is popular with the young male adventurers that she cannot be easily removed? Recently that's what I'm thinking.

My turn has come, so I take care of the procedure.

"We want to go to this area──"

When I pointed at the map and told which area we wanted to investigate at, Santoa-san looked at me and smiled.

"Aa~, it's Lyle-san. Usually you never come to me for taking care of the procedure, so we never have any chance to talk."

I was casually addressed by her. I scratched my head and apologized.

"Tha, that's right isn't it. Usually I would be going to Hawkins-san's place after all. So, we're going to this──"

"That's terrible~. Even though I'll help out with various things if it's Lyle-san."

I don't really care but, it somehow felt unpleasant to be called "Lyle-sanMr. Lyle". The Third often made fun of me by saying 'Mr. Lyle', so hearing those words would make me perceive it in a bad sense no matter what.

"I'm sorry but, I'm in a hurry here."

When I cut off Santoa-san from talking, I could hear tongue clicking from behind. When I turned around, the male adventurers are glaring at me.

Santoa-san herself looked a bit tearful.

"Horrible. Even though I only want to talk a bit with Lyle-san."

"N, no, that……a, anyway, let’s do it another time!"

I finished the procedure and left the tent as though escaping from there. I could hear the conversation of Santoa-san and the adventurers from behind.

"Santoa-chan, you want to come for dinner at our place today?"

"Ee~, but~"

"It’s fine. It’s not bean soup, we’re going to buy tasty things from old man Byron’s place."

"Then I’ll come~"

I can hear a really carefree conversation, but Rondo-san and others are waiting for me, so I leave from that place quickly.

.

The second day of dungeon subjugation.

Novem and Ralph-san are staying behind, while the other members stepped into the dungeon.

Because at the first day we had exterminated all the monsters near the entrance, we won’t get attacked around this area. Setting up a trap is forbidden, so we can enter inside easier than expected.

We were able to enter inside easily but…….

"What’s this!"

Rondo-san covered his mouth, while Rachel-san is walking unsteadily.

I’m the same too.

I pressed my forehead with my right hand and somehow walked dizzily.

"Could it be, we got caught in some kind of trap?"

When I said that, laughing voice came from inside the Jewel. It was the Second.

[Calm down. At first you will be unused to it no matter what. Inside the dungeon is a harsh place for first timer.]

The Fourth thoroughly explained about the reason.

[The inside of the dungeon is filled with mana dozens of times thicker than the outside. Because of that, you will feel in a bad shape. Well, you will get used to it after a while so don't worry. Also, you mustn't force yourself at this kind of time. Even so, perhaps the density is a bit high here.]

Perhaps because it appeared inside a forest, the ground of the inside of the dungeon is made from soil. Trees grew from the wall, forming a passage, while the ceiling is covered with tree branches and green leaves.

Light is shining in from between the branches and leaves, it's nice that we don't need any lighting.

Ralph-san who is unsteady on his feet and using his spear as a cane looked up to the ceiling and noticed something out of place.

"Wait a second. This morning it was cloudy wasn't it? It wasn't this sunny before we entered."

Sophia-san is carrying her battle axe on her back while her hand is placed on the wall.

"I've heard about it. In order to eat human, the dungeon will arrange an environment that is easy to enter. This is also a part of──uh!"

I approached Sophia-san who is pressing on her mouth and tried to rub her back. But, her battle axe is in the way so I cannot rub her well.

Zelphy-san shrugged seeing our situation.

"You guys are a bit unlucky. This place, even though its scale is small but the mana is really thick. This is too harsh for a beginner."

Zelphy-san who is laughing looked composed.

"Say, we're going to get used to this right?"

When I asked, Zelphy-san nodded.

"Yeah, you'll get used to it for sure. If you stay inside here for several hours, you'll feel better than now. Although, during that time you won't be able to do anything though."

Zelphy-san started walking after saying that. We desperately followed her. Perhaps there was a party who went ahead of us, because we were able to come out to a spacious room without encountering monster midway.

Zelphy-san checked the map and looked around before she found a part of the wall got wrenched open.

"Aa~, as I thought someone got ahead of us. Well, it can't be helped."

There is a spot that was covered with several branches overlapping as though to protect something──it seems, to be the treasure box of this dungeon.

"Is this a treasure box?"

Aria-san who is looking pale asked. Then Zelphy-san said we are resting here and told everyone to sit.

"First, we will use today and tomorrow to make everyone get used to the environment inside dungeon. Battle or investigation is secondary. It won't be a joke if you force yourself and get injured."

No one is objecting. No, no one could. Even if we are told to fight in this situation, I'll want to refuse as much as possible.

Even if we can fight enemy like goblin or insect type like this, stronger enemy than that might force into a hard fight.

"Also, fundamentally there is great variety of dungeon. We won't even know what kind of shape the treasure box will take. That's why, if you hear something like 'this is the absolute method of capture!', there isn't anything like that, so be careful. Gather as much information as you can, and then prepare before challenging the dungeon. That's the correct way."

From some time ago, Zelphy-san's gaze kept turning at me. She must be wanting to tell this to me.

Rachel-san looked pained, even so she asked Zelphy-san.

"Even so, nearly fifty people are challenging this dungeon……can we, earn result like this?"

This is really important for adventurer.

Zelphy-san nodded.

"You can rejoice about that. This dungeon is vast even though it's small scale, and it seems changes are happening frequently inside. The treasure box will also similarly get restored. We still don't know what kind of thing will be inside but, surely you will be able to recover one or two when challenging a dungeon like this."

I silently used the Arts of the Fifth and the Sixth and confirmed the situation inside the dungeon.

Inside the dungeon is swarming with yellow and red light dots.

There is no trap, as for the location of treasure box……I'm able to clearly locate them.

The Fourth spoke enviously.

[These Arts are really nice. I wish I also had them in my time.]

The Seventh talked while recalling the time when he received the benefit of these two's Arts.

[The Arts of these two were extremely effective. They were really useful not just in dungeon subjugation, but also in battlefield, and then also at peaceful time.]

I have a thought. Won't I be able to simply go around recovering treasure box without even encountering any monster if I use these two Arts?

But, at present there is a problem before that. Our body won't move well.

Rondo-san is looking a bit uneasy.

"But, if the scale is small won't the subjugation end after several days? If these many people are coming in, the subjugation will also be quick won't it?"

Zelphy-san placed her hand on her chin and answered Rondo-san's question.

"Although they said that the scale is small, it's also not a size that can be subjugated that easily. After all we don't even know where is the deepest room at. If I have to say more, this place is Dalien you know?"

We cannot really understand even if she told us that.

Zelphy-san laughed self-depreciatingly.

"I mean, that there isn't any adventurer here who is really that outstanding. When you also look at how adventurer from Centralle got dispatched here for the investigation, you can realize the level of Dalien's adventurer."

Putting aside veteran like Zelphy-san or Dalel-san, the quality of the adventurers in Dalien isn't high.

After all, in Dalien that is kind to beginner, it's only natural to go to other place when you have strength to a certain degree. The level of the adventurer here on the whole is low.

Rondo-san asked after pondering for a bit.

"Now that you mentioned it, how strong are the adventurers who came here from that Centralle?"

Zelphy-san fell into thought.

"How strong, is it? Well, they are armed over the top with magic tools, so your run of the mill adventurer won't be able to win. Just because they are carrying mostly magic tools for investigation right now, doesn't mean that they aren't bringing magic tool for fighting. If it's a fight without using them then I think even I can manage somehow but……"

Then The Seventh spoke with deep interest.

[I see, so they reproduced Arts like ours using magic tool. However, if it doesn't even reach a fraction of the capability of the Fifth and the Sixth's Arts……]

The Fifth asserted.

[Right now it's still not really a threat, is what that mean. I'm looking forward to the future. Or rather, in reality just how good is the performance of the magic tool right now?]

The Seventh answered.

[In my time, if it's Art then at best it will only be at the level of the first stage. I never heard of any magic tool able to reach the level of second stage.]

The Third who heard that spoke with a conflicted tone.

[Magic tool is complicated huh. If that's the case, isn't a Gem that recorded several Arts better? Why did it go out of fashion?]

The reason why Gem became obsolete.

It's simply because the easiness to use the Art that you want using magic tool. For a Gem to record several Arts, first the user has to be able to use their own Art until the third stage.

Magic tool eliminated that kind of troublesome procedure. Perhaps it can’t be helped that magic tool became the mainstream because you can just engrave the Art that you want into it.

Like that we took rest for quite a while, and after several hours passed, Zelphy-san clapped her hands.

"Come on, you guys must have gotten better compared to at first. We’re going to advance forward now, after that we’ll return outside."

Everyone stood up languidly and checked their equipment.

"Eh?"

It’s at that time. I felt a gaze and turned around, then I saw a slightly mysterious sight. From a gap of the trees that acted as wall, a vibrant flower is peeking out. The dangling stem of flower has several small bluish purple flowers bundled together, they are blooming into a tuft of flowers.

There shouldn’t be anything like that until just now but, did I overlook it? Besides, I felt a gaze but……there is no one, it must be my imagination.

"What’s the matter?"

Sophia-san approached me, so I pointed at the flower.

"No, there shouldn’t be flower there until just now but……"

When I’m going to touch it, the flower tuft fell as though to settle on my hand.

"Uwah!"

Sophia-san stared at the flowers inside my hand and muttered.

"This is duranta."

"You know it? Or rather you’re really knowledgeable about it."

Sophia-san looked a bit embarrassed.

"No, I only know it by chance. That’s, it’s a flower that bloom in hot place. I also know its meaning in flower language."

I look at the duranta flower on my hand, and then look at Sophia-san. Perhaps it’s better for Sophia-san to have it rather than me.

"Then, Sophia-san, will you have it?"

"Eh!? That’s……yes."

Sophia-san’s face turn red. But, a complaint came from inside the Jewel. It’s the Fourth.

[Oy you! Don’t present flower to woman carelessly! Do it after checking up various things, like its flower language! Besides──]

Continuing after the Fourth was the Fifth.

[Think of the place. Aria is watching you two.]

When I looked toward Aria-san after hearing that, she was averting her gaze. It seems she saw.

……Eh? Is this a bad thing?

Chapter 34 – The Elf Eva

[Lyle is like that isn't it? It's no good to have weak defenses.]

Inside the Jewel, in the room of round table.

It's a place where I can face the memory of the ancestors when I send my consciousness to inside the Jewel. The chairs of the ancestors are placed around the round table.

Although, the chair of the First that was right in front of me had vanished. There is only a silver great sword floating at the place where the First sat in the past.

If asked what I'm doing in that kind of place, I'm being surrounded and scolded by the ancestors.

It's not about anything like my incompetence in the dungeon subjugation.

It seems that me giving flower to Sophia-san carelessly is no good.

The Third is picking fault on me with an exasperated gesture.

[Even though Aria-chan was watching. There is other time even if you want to give flower. Like when there is no one else watching, or──]

I'm in the middle of getting complained at, but there is something bothering me regarding that.

"Err, more importantly about that flower, it wasn't there when we first entered the room. It was like it grew out from the wall when I noticed……is something like that common?"

The Fourth pushed up his glasses with his index finger to fix its position. The lenses of the glasses shined eerily.

[Don’t diver from the topic. Is what I want to say but, this problem won’t be resolved just by nitpicking at you. Lyle, remember to give some kind of present to Aria and Novem-chan too during this subjugation period. Also, about the flower.]

Is this problem so serious that he needs to be that highly strung?

While I’m thinking that, the Second folded his arms and said.

[I have the feeling that the flowers has some kind of meaning, but I also have the feeling that it’s pointless to be bothered by it because dungeon is always full of mystery.]

The Fifth hid his mouth with his hand while falling into thought.

[Duranta, huh. What is its meaning in the flower language?]

The Sixth closed his eyes and tried to remember.

[I feel like I’ve heard it from somewhere, or perhaps not……I cannot remember.]

The Seventh seemed to not know from the beginning.

[Sophia seems to know, so if you’re curious how about asking her, Lyle.]

That might be the fastest way.

The Second put both his hands behind his head.

[Well, that’s also curious but, right now let’s talk about the dungeon. Tomorrow Novem-chan and that big spearman will enter the dungeon. They won’t be able to move properly so there is no use in getting impatient but, there is something that really bothers me.]

"Something bothering?"

The Second nodded.

[It’s about Zelphy’s betting. It’s a betting that is using you guys. That’s also concerning but, the problem is the adventurers around you. How should I say it, their quality is really low.]

The Third looked at the Second.

[Yeah, I somehow understand. Somehow, it’s the atmosphere of this group you know? It’s a bit bad.]

The Second nodded.

[Young adventurers who are burning with rivalry. In addition there are the adventurers with nasty quality around you. It feels like various troubles will come at you.]

It doesn’t sound like a joke when the Second said it. Although it’s not to the degree of the First, the Second’s instinct was also sharp.

The Second looked at me and grinned in enjoyment.

"Are they going to pick up a fight with us? Or perhaps attacking us or something?"

The Second laughed.

[That might happen but, it might be even more troublesome than that. Well, my instinct tells me that they won’t try anything with you directly. Though. Though personally I’m also curious with Zelphy’s thinking.]

The Sixth also agreed with the Second.

[It looks like she is thinking about various things. Also Lyle, in dungeon subjugation, it’s a place where not many people are watching. It won’t be strange no matter what happens, so be careful.]

I told my honest feeling toward the two of them.

"The betting, and the bad atmosphere of the surrounding is it? I don’t really get it but……"

It’s troubling if we are used as betting subject without our agreement, and even if they said that the atmosphere of the surrounding is bad, I don’t know what I should be cautious at.

The Second looked at me and shrugged.

[This too will be a good experience. We too are also uninformed about the adventurer’s style, so we’ll wait and see for a while. What if you also think about it by yourself?]

The ancestors who are having fun with the dungeon subjugation are talking with great interest about the style of the adventurer. They will do this if it’s them, why aren’t the adventurers doing this? I’m watching the conversation between the ancestors continuing like that.

.

The next day.

I asked Rondo-san and Rachel-san to guard the luggage while entering into the dungeon with the other members──but.

"Excuse me──"

"Ye~s, the next person."

Inside the guild’s tent, even though it’s my turn, the receptionist Santoa-san started to take care of the form of the next person.

The Second’s voice came from inside the Jewel.

[Ah ah, you got hated. Well, that’s also fine though.]

The Fifth is irritated.

[This woman, I don’t like her.]

The Sixth is laughing while calming down the Fifth.

[Isn’t that fine. Well, this woman just amount to this much in the end.]

Perhaps my reaction yesterday was bad, because Santoa-san won’t even look to my way. She is the only receptionist, so in the end she grudgingly took care of my form without even hiding her reluctant attitude.

Furthermore, she also forcefully assigned us to different area, not at the place where we want to go at.

A man in front of me who finished with his procedure was grinning when he passed by me.

When I got outside and headed toward the place of Novem and others, Ralph-san was tired of waiting.

"You’re slow Lyle. The other guys already departed see."

I apologized while joining them, but Zelphy-san doesn’t say anything to me who took a long time with the procedure.

Novem approached me.

"Lyle-sama, is there any problem?"

While I’m pondering whether I should talk about it with Novem, Ralph-san is hurrying us up.

"Let’s go right away. We also didn’t really earn much yesterday right? As expected it will be harsh if we doesn’t earn anything two days in a row."

I shook my head and entered into the dungeon.

"Let’s talk later."

I said that to Novem and focused only on the dungeon subjugation right now.

.

Speaking about just the result, we didn’t earn anything from the dungeon subjugation at the third day too.

There is also the time we were taking to let Novem and Ralph-san getting used to the dungeon, but other than that there were other parties getting ahead of us who collected all the treasure boxes and defeated all the monsters.

When we returned and reported to Rondo-san, he said "It can’t be helped. Let’s do our best tomorrow."

But, this…….

"Is this my fault?"

In a corner of the campsite. I sat down on a tree root at a place where there isn’t any other people and muttered. In respond the ancestors inside the Jewel are──.

[Obviously.]

[Of course!]

[Work harder.]

[There is no other reason than that.]

[In the first place, Lyle is the person in charge of the party after all.]

[Yes! You have to work a bit harder.]

──My shoulders dropped and I sighed.

The way I dealt with the receptionist Santoa-san at the second day was bad. If only I managed somehow at that time, our earning wouldn’t be zero for two days in a row.

It feels like I had angered someone that I shouldn’t anger.

"……I’ll try apologizing tomorrow."

It will be hopeless if I don’t apologize to Santoa-san and at least ask her to process our procedure properly. Hawkins-san is busy with other works, it doesn’t look like he has any leeway to worry about us.

The Second gave advice to me.

[No, that’s impossible. I think your situation won’t change even if you apologize to that receptionist girl.]

"Eh!?"

When I lifted my head in shock, the Sixth proudly explained.

[Although the dungeon’s scale is small, it’s still quite wide. Can you say that it’s just coincidence someone got ahead of you in that kind of place? Well, perhaps it will happen sometimes but, I can say it for sure. At this rate Lyle……your earning will definitely be in the red.]

We prepared various things in order to participate in the dungeon subjugation. Naturally we used money. We have to be in the black in order to recover that fund too.

It will be a heavy loss if we spend two weeks without earning anything. The Fourth yelled.

[In the red! What unpleasant words. It will be meaningless if you don’t earn at least ten gold coins from this dungeon subjugation. Ten coins at minimum. Speaking honestly I want double that amount though. Listen well, Lyle. In order to prepare for this dungeon subjugation──]

The cheapskate Fourth who hated the words in the red was telling me various numbers repeatedly. Aren’t we participating because this is a good experience? While I’m thinking that, a voice called at me.

"Oh, what are you doing there?"

When I turned around, a girl is standing there. Her age seems to be the same or slightly older than me. Her hair color is blond──no, it’s pink, or should I say pink blond? The wavy long hair looked radiant within the darkening scenery.

Her eyes are purple. It’s the same color with Novem and Aria-san. Her skin is white with healthy looking limbs. What is even more eye-

catching is her ears. They're peculiar ears that are bigger than human ear with pointy tip.

I know this from rumor and book but, this is the first time I saw the real thing from nearby.

She is an elf.

"……I'm feeling down."

I'm troubled of how I should answer and in the end I answered honestly. The Third is laughing loudly at that.

[Lyle, you're making her troubled with that answer.]

The girl who is wearing a loose white clothes──tunic is surprised hearing my answer, but she then started laughing right away.

"Ahahaha, sorry. No, I called out at you thinking 'this person is really down isn't he~', but to think that you will respond honestly that you are feeling down, I never even expected that. You're amusing aren't you."

It seems my answer is amusing for her. I don't really get it.

"I am Eva. Nice to meet you."

Saying that the girl winked. I also introduced myself.

"I'm Lyle. Lyle Walt. Err, by the way Eva-san, why are you here?"

Looking closer she isn't dressed like an adventurer. But, looking at her feet, they looked lithe and trained. She also doesn't feel like a prostitute.

"Me? I think it's obvious what most elves are doing in this kind of place. Singer, storyteller, dancer, actress……call it anything you like."

Singer──now that she mentioned it, before this Novem said that many elves are performer.

"Are you a member of a performer troupe? Eh? You're coming to this kind of place?"

When I looked around, Eva-san made a slightly troubled face.

"I came here but, I'm not a member of the troupe. I came this far by hitching a ride with them but, as expected if I want to sing……I got refused when I asked for permission."

Eva-san laughed brightly and sat beside me.

Like that we talked about various things.

"Besides the adventurer here, they are mean aren't they? They will try to touch your butt or something when we're singing, their atmosphere is also bad……even though I heard that the earning will be good at the campsite of dungeon subjugation!"

She suddenly got angry and made a serious expression this time.

"You know, I ran away from the forest I was living at and then traveled mostly alone. Well, I came from a place that is quite famous, so the other elves are taking care of me but, it's hard to earn money. Outside the forest there is different rule about the turf after all. I will get scolded if I just sing as I pleased."

Laughing, angry, dejected. I think she is a person with abundant emotions.

While I'm listening to Eva-san's story like that, she made a certain suggestion.

"Say, Lyle……won't you, buy me for a night? I'll give you a low price."

She peeked up at my face from below. I can see the valley of her breast from the chest area of her tunic.

The Seventh got noisy.

[Nuh! Could it be that it's finally time for Lyle too to experience woman!?]

The Sixth laughed and denied that.

[Impossible.]

That’s a bit irritating. Along with defiance toward the ancestors who are like that, I unconsciously──.

"I, I’ll buy you."

──Answered like that. Eva-san clapped her hands together with a really happy look.

"Really!? Thank you Lyle. Then, I’ll teach you my family name. Nihil, I’m Eva of the Nihil clan."

Eva-san said that and stood up. She then pulled my hand to make me stand.

"I don’t know why you’re feeling down but, I’ll make you feel lively right away. Even though I look like this but I have great confidence."

The Third spoke carefreely.

[Oh, she is really confident. I wonder if Lyle will finally know woman with this~]

The Third’s voice sounded somewhat teasing. Urged by Eva-san, I left that place.

"Hey, Lyle. Where is your tent at?"

"Eh, ah……this way."

I showed Eva-san to the place where our tent is located.

.

[I knew it would be something like this. Well, isn’t that great, Lyle.]

I listened to the Second’s consoling voice while being surrounded by my comrades and Eva-san. After dinner, we are drinking tea while listening to Eva-san’s song.

It seems that her asking me to buy her for a night was in the sense of as a performer.

……I had no strange expectation. This is alright.

When Eva-san finished singing, she wiped the sweat on her forehead.

"Aah~, as I thought singing in front of other people is great."

Novem handed a drink with a smile. Eva-san accepted that and appeased her thirst.

Her singing voice was great, and in addition she was singing looking like she genuinely enjoyed it.

Aria-san pulled at my arm.

"Wait, where did you catch this kind of girl? It was surprising when she said that she will give a performance for a night if we give her food and a bed to sleep."

Yes, actually Eva-san──isn’t a formal member of the dungeon subjugation. Because of that she is in a situation without food and place to sleep.

It seems she will be able to secure food and place to sleep if she rely on the performer troupe she hitched a ride with, but the person herself disliked doing that.

And so, she is doing her singing performance in front of us like this if we provide her with food.

"No, rather than catching, it’s like I’m the one who got caught or something."

Aria-san looked at me and frowned.

"Lyle, you should be a bit firmer. Someday you'll meet painful experience like this."

I dropped my shoulders. Then Eva-san started talking.

"Ee~, then next I think I'll talk about the legend and folklore from the northern part of Bahnseim. I came from the north to here just some time ago, but as expected the atmosphere of the northern part was different because there is a large country at the other side of the border."

The northern part of Bahnseim is bordered with a large country named Cartaffs. Until now there are often small skirmish and large war with them.

The local color in that kind of place has a lot of story with theme of war passed down through generations.

Eva-san continued.

"Many of the stories in northern part are about the achievement of knight and soldier, but I also heard a slightly unusual story so I'll tell that one."

Rondo-san showed his interest.

"The north huh. I never went there but, I once heard that it's a harsh place."

Ralph-san also had the same impression.

"Yeah, now that you mentioned it there is a lot of war there, so even children will normally carry weapon and fight. That's what I heard. That's an amazing place."

Sophia-san slightly fell into thought.

"As expected I think that story is a lie, even so it's the northern part. Perhaps it's possible or perhaps not……"

Then the Second spoke with a nostalgic voice.

[North……mother also came from the north.]

It seems that it’s a region that is also related to Walt House.

Eva-san started to recite the story that she heard from the north.

"In a small village at the north. There was a girl there. The girl loved the small village, and then she was also adored by the people of the village."

It seems that the main character is a kind girl. A gentle scene was narrated.

But, when the story advanced, it became a dangerous story. Bandits appeared and kidnapped the villagers. There, the kind girl chased after the bandits with weapon in one hand……chasing with one weapon in hand?

Before long the girl caught up with the bandits. However the sight that the girl witnessed there was the bandits getting attacked by a vicious monster. The kind girl then defeated that vicious monster with the weapon she carried and saved the kidnapped villagers.

After that, a noble heard the rumor of that girl and begged her to marry him. They then married.

……Hm?

The kind girl defeated a monster that the bandits couldn’t defeat? By herself?

The ancestors inside the Jewel laughed. They laughed loudly. All six of them exploded in laughter.

[What do you mean kind girl! No, that woman is already a ferocious warrior there!]

[The folklore of the north is extreme huh!]

[Just what kind of woman she could be. I want to look.]

[She might be a woman even more terrifying than bear.]

[That’s possible!]

[I want to have a look at the house that intentionally accept that woman with marriage.]

It seems they are pleased by the story in a different sense.

All of us who finished listening to the story made a conflicted expression. Rachel-san tilted her head and said.

"That’s interesting but, it’s different from the norm isn’t it? The main character is a girl, so I thought that a knight or a prince will save her and they will marry."

Speaking of the norm, what Rachel-san mentioned was the typical story. In that case it would be a story of saving a weak girl.

A girl personally going to defeat bandits is just too unusual.

Eva-san is smiling cheerfully.

"It’s a real story that I learned in the north. I also haven’t even dramatized it like other story-telling, it’s a novel story."

Certainly it might be amusing if you think of it as a novel story. In fact the ancestors are also greatly happy with how many points there are to retort at rather than the story itself.

Ralph-san looked at Sophia-san.

"That girl might be someone like Sophia-chan. You know, Sophia-chan is carrying a battle axe after all."

Everyone’s gaze gathered on Sophia-san.

"I, I’m not that rash. Besides, from the story it sounded like the girl also has confidence to defeat the bandits. She is too different from me."

Aria-san said to Sophia-san who is like that.

"Aren’t you two similar? You are far stronger than the average man."

Sophia-san who heard this stood up in indignation. She grabbed Aria-san’s shoulders and protested while shaking her. Aria-san is laughing and let herself get shaken.

"We aren’t similar! Even like this I’m in the category of ladylike. If you say that, then it’s Aria instead who is really similar with that character!"

"Sorry, sorry."

It’s great that they are getting along.

Novem talked with Eva-san.

"Were you going around the north by yourself?"

For some reason Eva-san’s distance with Novem is close. It also feels like Novem is allowing that.

"I went around there with other troupe. Even though I look like this I’m from the Nihil clan, so they were accommodating with me."

Then Zelphy-san raised her face in surprise.

"Nihil, you mean the clan that is managing the forest that is the birthplace of the elves right? I’ve only heard the story but, they actually exists huh."

Eva-san puffed up her chest proudly.

"Amazing right? That’s why, I won’t get troubled if I’m just traveling. ……Though they are merciless in regard to doing performance or singing."

As expected it seemed the other elves wouldn’t give even an inch in regard to job matter.

I feel curious and──.

"Where is Eva-san’s birthplace located at?"

──I asked.

The atmosphere of that place instantly changed. Gazes gathered on me.

Eva-san is smiling friendlily, but she doesn’t answer.

Aria-san also tilted her head. Ralph-san also looked around with similar look of puzzlement. Then, Novem represented everyone and explained to me.

"Lyle-sama, the location of the forest that is the birthplace of the elves is a secret of the elves. We won’t be able to learn it unless there is a really extenuating circumstance. If anyone try to investigate it carelessly──"

Eva-san continued from there with a low voice.

"──People who investigate will vanish from the face of earth unnoticed by anyone. That’s why Lyle too be careful.
……Ahahaha, that’s a lie. A lie! It’s not a secret. It’s basically in an unexplored region deep inside a mountain. People won’t come there but, for elves it’s a really important place."

Even though she was giving out a scary atmosphere at the start, at the end Eva-san started laughing. Rachel-san is surprised.

"Lies! I was taught that we absolutely mustn’t ask any elf about it!"

Rondo-san also nodded while muttering "I was also told that". Sophia-san was also the same.

Eva-san raised her index finger and put it on her lips.

"This is one of the gag routine of the elves. Actually it’s not really a big matter but we all make it like something exaggerated and when there is someone who carelessly ask about it, we will act with that atmosphere. Besides, even if you search that place it’s just a forest

without anything special. We will even welcome you if you come to the forest."

I was told about the trivial fact that the location of the elf's birthplace is actually just a routine gag of the elves. Then Novem is also chuckling.

"Novem, so you also knew about it!"

When I said that, her finger wiped the tear that came out from laughing too much and she answered.

"My apologies. The atmosphere was tense so it was amusing"

Eva-san high-fived with Novem. Rather, these two got along really well huh. Is there something that attracts both of them to each other?

"So Novem also knew. In addition you matched the story with mine, perhaps we can get along really well! Hey, can you let me sleep here from today? I joined the dungeon subjugation troupe without really thinking much, so I'm troubled with food and the place to sleep. At this rate, I'll get raped by some nasty adventurers."

Eva-san is begging at Novem with teary eyes. Novem looked briefly at me.]

Unable to do something like throwing her out, I nodded for the time being. Then Novem gave permission to Eva-san.

"It's a cramped tent so if you don't mind it then please feel free. Also, we'll ask you to do a bit of work. If you're an elf then magic──"

Eva-san's right hand clapped her chest.

"If it's magic and bow then leave it to me. Elf is also a good walker, walking inside the forest is the same like walking on flat ground for us."

Those are really reliable words.

Rondo-san looked at Eva-san and smiled slightly.

"The second and third day didn’t really go well but, now I feel slightly lighter. This makes me notice that this kind of entertainment is also important."

I recalled these two days and felt really conflicted. Even though it’s only temporary but I’m the leader. The responsibility lies on me.

"I want to make a comeback somehow tomorrow."

Then the Fourth’s voice came from inside the Jewel.

[Don’t say I want to make a comeback. Say I will make a comeback! As expected it will be hard if your earning is zero for three days in a row.]

The other parties are discovering treasure box, defeating monster, and earning money. We cannot stay like this.

But, the Sixth alone is saying something ominous.

[Lyle……at this rate, you won’t be able to earn much even from the fourth day.]

No, as expected we should be able to earn more starting from tomorrow. I want to believe that.

.

"……So it’s also no good here."

Rondo-san’s tired voice resounded inside a room within the dungeon.

Ralph-san roughly struck the ground with his spear.

"Shit-!"

Zelphy-san hasn’t been giving us any particular instruction since the first day. She is watching silently, as though she is ascertaining our ability.

I looked up to the ceiling.

Time passed and the light is becoming orange. At this rate, it will become dark inside the dungeon within several hours.

I clenched my fist and gritted my teeth before opening my mouth.

"……Let’s return."

I know. I already know.

Several group of adventurers were going ahead on the course that we planned to go through. They searched the treasure box and went around defeating monster along our route.

It was as though they were getting in our way.

Novem brushed up her hair to behind her ear and then she looked around.

"Lyle-sama. It looks like we aren’t welcomed here."

The adventurer parties entering into the dungeon……several of them are obviously hindering us.

Aria-san is also irritated.

"This is horrible no matter what! The dungeon is this wide. It’s absolutely strange that they got ahead of us every time! Besides, the guild should be coordinating so that we won’t get in each other’s way!"

I who can use the Arts of the Fifth and the Sixth knew that there are parties that went ahead of us from the start and got in our way.

They already got ahead of us by the time we entered into the dungeon.

No matter how early I lined up in front of the guild’s reception, my turn will get shifted to the last. We departed last and by the time we entered into the dungeon, the other parties already got ahead of us and earned money. There are parties who acted while ignoring the guild’s arrangement.

In addition, no matter what Santoa-san……would assign us to a place where the earning isn't really good.

The problem is that the current situation won't change even when I used the Arts in full strength.

"If only I did better……"

Ralph-san made a suggestion with an angry yell.

"If it's like this then we should go outside our assigned area. We won't earn anything if we got completely forestalled like this!"

Rondo-san pressed his left hand on his forehead and said.

"Ralph, that's a violation of the rule. We will get a penalty if we are found out."

"Then what're we gonna do! Even though there are some bunches who're obviously ignoring the rule, there's no way we can just stay quiet!"

Rondo-san and Ralph-san started to argue, but Zelphy-san is just watching. Novem and Aria-san are approaching me.

Novem is calm.

"Lyle-sama, I believe that we'll immediately get reported if we break the rule. At this rate it will be a bit difficult for us."

Aria-san sometimes will look at Zelphy-san with a frustrated look.

"Certainly we joined this a bit forcefully but, they'll go this far? Even though the number is already lacking, they're still getting in our way, I can't believe it."

Originally more party than now should be gathered for a dungeon subjugation. But, Dalien's guild didn't have enough manpower so this dungeon is challenged with fewer people than planned.

That's why, the number of adventurers participating in this dungeon subjugation isn't too many. I looked at Zelphy-san.

……It doesn’t look like she will give advice.

"Ahaha, this is really bad isn’t it."

It’s exactly as the Sixth said.

Chapter 35 – Sword Wings

──Rex of Sword Wings was in a good mood at the end of the fourth day.

"It was exhausting at the first and second day, but if it's like this then it feels like the dungeon subjugation will end in a good note."

In front of him was treasure that they obtained from treasure box……well, it wasn't to such degree, but the items lined up there were still quite something. Gold coins, silver coins, and even armor and the like.

Rex took from among them a gauntlet that looked like it had only been created before trying it out on his right hand.

"It fit me to a tee."

While he was staring at the beautiful gauntlet, his comrade that was his fellow warrior took a long sword.

"I think we'll get gold coin if we sell this. But, it's also not bad to use it."

If they sold all these items that they gathered, then they would surely more than ten gold coins for them. Although, that was only if they could return to Dalien and sold them there.

A lightly armored man looked toward Rex and asked anxiously.

"Hey, Rex, you're really going to sell them to that Byron? He's going to lower the price, on top of that if you buy alcohol at that guy's place the price is going to get doubled."

The lightly armored men were the scouts of the party. They were also in charge of trap and the like. They were staring longingly at the treasures lined up on the table.

Even Rex actually wanted to use these items for himself or sold them with high price.

But──.

"This is necessary. I don’t want to get hindered by the surrounding because we are getting stingy here. You guys, do you want to become like that “womanizer” who can’t even earn anything?"

Money was necessary so that the other parties wouldn’t work together to hinder them.

Rex and his group was also newcomer like Lyle’s group. There were people who would snatch the earning of such rookies.

One of his comrades shook his head.

"As expected I want to be spared from that. Even so, don’t those guys realized how the other adventurers are thinking about them?"

Rex turned a sharp gaze at his comrade who was laughing insultingly.

"Idiot, if we’re careless then even would meet the same fate. ……Isn’t that right, Dalel-san?"

Ahead of Rex’s gaze was Dalel. He took off the metal armor that he brought here because this was his last job and sat down on a chair tiredly.

Dalel grinned and said,

"That might happen."

He only said that one sentence and immediately fell silent again. Dalel didn’t give any advice like usual. Rex and his other comrades sent bitter gaze to Dalel who was like that.

However, no one could complain to Dalel who had taken care of them until now. Rex considered their plan after this.

"Let’s have that womanizer guy to stand out in the bad sense. During that time we’ll earn as much as we can. Also, converse half of this into money for today. And then buy alcohol and the kind of meat that can become snack from that Byron. I’ll go deliver them after that."

The lightly armored adventurer looked dejected.

"We’re just eating vegetable and bean soup here, plus salted hard meat we bought before coming here. And yet we’re giving alcohol and meat to other guys……I want to become big shot quick."

Even while complaining, his comrades talked to each other about what would be sold and what they would keep behind before going to Byron’s place.

Dalel was watching that with a grin──.

.

──Night.

There was the bar that Byron opened near the place where the elf troupe was displaying their performance. It was a bar with only tables and chairs lined up under the sky.

There were also stalls lined up nearby, providing snack for alcohol in abundance. But, no matter what kind of item the price would be doubled or more than the normal price.

Zelphy and Dalel could be found there.

Both of them were drinking alcohol and ordered snack while talking to each other about their respective situation.

Zelphy scratched her hair.

"My side is no good. It’s completely no good. They can’t even earn one copper coin after four days."

Dalel was laughing instead.

"It’s fine if you give them a little advice y’know. Well, we decided to just shut up and watch this time, so it looks like the other guys are brazenly breaking the rule and making a killing though."

Zelphy and Dalel. There was a reason why rule breaking inside the dungeon was running rampant even with the two of them here.

The two of them decided that they wouldn’t butt in this time and they told that to the other adventurers. The reason of the two of them was the same.

Which was in order to make the young people they were training met a slightly painful experience.

However, the Sword Wings at Dalel’s place had learned the way to curry favor with their surrounding from their experience until now and practiced it here.

Because of that, they were earning quite much at this fourth day.

In contrast Lyle’s group was in a situation where they couldn’t even earn one copper coin. As expected it seemed that even Zelphy didn’t think that it would be this bad.

"Those guys are planning to mercilessly make a killing while thoroughly beating down Lyle and others to the ground. At least be more discrete damn it. Bastard, normally I’m going to punch these guys flying with what they’re doing."

Zelphy complained while drinking alcohol and glancing at the performance of the elves at the side. Adventurers and people who were participating in this dungeon subjugation were gathering in attraction toward the performance of the elves. She also caught sight of children in teen age among the people, dancing and having fun following the rhythm of the elves.

Dalel reached out to a snack while checking at Zelphy.

"By the way, about Lyle in your place. You said that he is the type to get serious when he is cornered? Tell me if he is going to do something soon okay."

Zelphy looked at her cup that became empty and hesitated whether to order more or not.

"Who knows. As expected he is feeling down today but, there isn't any sign of him getting motivated……chih, the alcohol is also expensive so I'll stop here for today."

Dalel waved his hand and saw Zelphy off. Zelphy also waved her hand and left the place.

After walking a bit, she encountered an unfamiliar adventurer getting drunk and acting violently.

"Ahn? A guy who can do nothing except standing guard is complaining at me huh!"

An adventurer who was allowed to enter the dungeon was grabbing the collar of someone who was only working in the campsite. It seemed the reason was simply the adventurer rudely pushing something because it was in the way, and when an adventurer who acted as guard came running, the drunk man got even more belligerent.

Zelphy clicked her tongue.

"Chih, disgusting."

She intentionally passed through that place and glared at the drunk adventurer. When the drunkard realized that it was Zelphy, he hurriedly bowed his head and ran away.

(Most of the bunch gathered here is only at this level. I wanted Lyle to get through some hardships but, what to do now)

A group that made fun of the logistical support and unscrupulously broke the rule. While Zelphy was racking her brain, she caught sight of Santoa being surrounded by adventurers.

The jovial adventurers offered food to Santoa and made request to her.

"Santoa-chan, we're counting on you for next time too. Next give us that area okay?"

Santoa answered with a smile.

"Again~? Fine then. Ah, perhaps this alcohol will be nice?"

The adventurer ordered for alcohol while speaking with a laugh.

"Even so those guys are dull huh. No matter what normally anyone will notice after being unable to earn anything like that."

Santoa was also laughing.

"That's no good~. Is it okay to bully rookie like that?"

Zelphy was irritated.

(So you're also complicit huh!)

Seeing Santoa getting spoiled by the adventurers, Zelphy scratched her hair roughly.

"……Perhaps nothing can be done here even if Lyle is getting serious."

Zelphy thought about Lyle and others who got caught in the trap of the surrounding and began to worry whether she should lend a hand or not──.

.

The night of the fourth day.

I sent my consciousness into the Jewel, inside the room of round table.

It's in order to borrow the wisdom of the ancestors but…….

[You cannot earn even a copper after the fourth day, Lyle is hopeless.]

The Third is grinning while looking at me. The other ancestors are also making the same face. Or rather, I think they understand already now that it has come to this.

"I’m sorry, but this isn’t a laughing matter so please help me. Honestly, at this rate we will really just simply being participant in this subjugation."

I even invited Rondo-san’s party, as expected I don’t want this to end like this. When I say that, the ancestors looked at each other’s face.

The Second scratched his hair.

[Well, if we’re going to give advice──]

"If you’re going to give advice!"

The Second lifted his face and looked at me with intense concentration, then he laughed while making a thumb up and,

[There isn’t really anything!]

I’m dumbfounded and then yelled angrily at the Second.

"What’s with that! Please think a bit more seriously. I’m being serious here!"

Then the Fifth looked at me and snorted.

[You come crying to us because you cannot solve the situation by yourself, and then you are making a ruckus when you don’t get advice?]

When I fell silent because he stabbed at where it hurt, the Sixth calmed down the Fifth.

[Well, let’s leave it at that. It was us who told Lyle to participate in the dungeon subjugation. We should give him advice at least. After all it’s also getting boring just watching and laughing.]

The Seventh also nodded.

[I guess. He has make us laugh enough after all.]

……Eh? Could it be, all of them were watching and laughing at my action? I think that's really terrible thing to do though.

"That's cruel."

The Third made a shameless excuse.

[No, no, although we are also experienced in subjugating dungeon, but we're amateur when it come to subjugating dungeon as adventurer. We were focusing on watching the situation at first. But, as expected after four days doing that we have grasped the gist.]

The Fourth took off his glasses and wiped the lenses with a cloth.

[Well, we are also thinking of various things. Now then, Lyle……actually you have to solve this problem by yourself, you understand that right?]

I straightened my posture and looked at the Fourth. The Fourth put on his glasses and nodded, then he smiled a little.

[It's fine. You can make a comeback from here.]

Then the Sixth stood up.

[Now then, first thing you have to do……as expected it's information gathering.]

Should I investigate about the adventurer parties getting in our way? But, after we identify those parties, how should we deal with them…….

I thought until that far but, the ancestors' words were contrary to my expectatiaon.

The Fifth spoke shortly.

[Then, spend a day investigating the rear support.]

……Eh? It's unrelated with the parties doing dungeon subjugation?

.

The morning of the fifth day.

I spoke to the members inspecting their equipment and told them──.

"Ee~, we're going to rest today."

I continued my explanation in front of the dumbfounded members.

"We're only going to get beaten t the punch even if we enter the dungeon like this, so if that's the case then first we should gather information in order to think up a solution to breakthrough. And so everyone, let's look around the campsite. Ah, don't move around by yourself. If possible doing it with three people per group will be better……"

With our current number we can form two groups at most. While I'm thinking that, I found Eva-san's figure sending me a hopeful gaze from inside the tent.

"……Then, Eva-san should join us too."

Eva-san took a guts pose, while Rondo-san was bewildered on the other hand.

"No, Lyle-kun. I understand about gathering information in order to form a breakthrough plan but, what do you mean by looking around the campsite? If we're going to investigate the parties doing dungeon subjugation then I think it's better to do it at night."

I shook my hand to the side.

"Ah, we only need to investigate about that limited to what we can. Please focus your investigation more on the other people in charge of the rear support. I'll give each group ten silver coins, use that money to stroll around. Please listen to the various people's talk. Let's meet up again at lunch time at where the food carts are lined up."

After that I said "Then let’s breakup" before taking along Novem and Eva-san with me.

Ralph-san looked like he want to say something to me but, Rachel-san poked him with her staff and stopped him.

"That’s what Lyle said, so let’s use the chance to rest today while looking around the campsite. Rondo too, quick. Come to think of it, who will stay behind to guard our things?"

Aria-san and Zelphy-san looked at each other and raised their hand. Zelphy-san is sending me a doubtful gaze.

"We’ll take the first turn as guard. You will take turn later right?"

I nodded.

"Of course."

.

The campsite of the dungeon subjugation group was a bit peculiar.

After passing a certain amount of time in this location, the tents of each party were lined up and then there was also entertainment prepared.

The adventurers staying behind to guard the luggage would make a call to other party from the morning and gambled, while the elves would display their singing and performance to receive money offering.

The prostitutes whose busy time is at night is sleeping, but there is no change to the lively atmosphere.

According to the Sixth,

[The merchants who are siphoning off money from adventurers right after they earned money like this must be more profitable.]

He said.

Rather than risking life to challenge dungeon, being a merchant who is doing business with those adventurers will be more profitable. This is why the world is mysterious.

I visited a stall, bought three skewered grilled meat, then me, Novem, and Eva-san ate them.

As to be expected from a stall doing business in a troublesome place like this, the price is really expensive.

"It’s delicious but it’s really expensive."

While I’m eating and saying that, Novem looked around and explained.

"When doing business in this kind of place, it will excessively take a lot of expenses unlike usual. Well, they can also earn even more profit from that though."

Thinking of how there isn’t even any watering place nearby, it’s really difficult even just to secure drinking water.

Eva-san is watching the elves doing their singing performance. Elf children who are younger than us are singing with adventurers who came looking around as their audience.

"The children of the troupe are polishing their art like this. Even if they participate at night it will only be limited to helping out, and if they’re lucky they can also receive money. How nice, I also wanted to be born to an elf who has a troupe."

Eva-san dropped her shoulders in dejection. It seems she ran away from home to travel alone. She left her home alone because of her hunger for the story at the outside world, so she must be someone with the ability to take action.

The Second’s voice came from the Jewel.

[Lyle, it’s fine looking around at the stalls and the troupe, but let’s go look at the cook too now. After that, meet up with the others and take turn with Aria and Zelphy.]

I ate my skewered meat, threw the garbage into the trash can placed beside the stall and started walking. Novem and Eva-san also followed behind, but Novem asked me.

"It’s still too early for us to meet up with others."

"No, I want to look at the lunch’s situation."

Novem nodded hearing my words. Eva-san seemed to not understand and tilted her head.

"You want to look at people eating? How strange."

She seemed to harbor such impression.

.

The cook who is in charge of the meal of the group is a male who opened a restaurant in Dalien. It seemed he was formerly an adventurer, so he has a trained physique also skilled in his work.

Apparently the evaluation of his restaurant is quite good, so he left the restaurant in his son’s care and participate with the group of dungeon subjugation. The reason he participate is because of the sizable sum of money he is promised as his pay it seems.

This is a group of several hundred people. It’s an extremely hard labor to feed them at the morning, noon, and evening. As expected, quite the sizable amount of money must be promised to him.

Just before noon, various people are eating and trying to finish before the adventurers came to eat.

If there is a problem, it must be the terrible quality of the ingredients even if the cook is skilled. Most of the meal is mainly made from vegetable and bean, the people eating are complaining.

I’m watching that from a slight distance away.

"So today is vegetable dregs and bean soup again huh."

"I ain’t motivated like this."

"I want to eat something that hit the spot a bit more."

The cook is working silently. But, when he gave instruction to the helpers, his voice will get rough no matter what.

"Prepare the plates right away!"

"Ye, yes!"

He must be feeling irritated.

The Sixth is watching that while collecting information.

[A cook whose cooking is evaluated quite highly in Dalien is doing his best with insufficient ingredient after coming here but he still can't receive any appreciation. If he isn't motivated then there is other thing he can do but……hmm]

At this time, the people eating are adventurers who are in charge of drawing water, the adventurers patrolling the campsite, the people taking care of the horses and so on. There are also children among them.

Other than them……well, there are various people. From looking at them I can see how they are working in order to enable us the main participants to be able to subjugate the dungeon.

When the people finished their meal and moved to leave, they crossed path with another set of adventurers coming in. They are adventurers who're staying behind due to different reasons, whether it's to guard the luggage, holiday, or other things.

Their tone is even ruder compared to the people who were here before this.

"Chih, it taste like shit."

"Oi, chef, do your work properly."

"Shit, if it's like this then it's better to eat at the stall or at Byron's place."

‘It’s better to eat at the stall or Byron-jiisan’s place where the price is a rip-off.’ The adventurer said that and leave with their meal unfinished.

The adventurers who seem to have no money to do the same continue to eat but while still continuing to complain.

The Second is watching that in exasperation.

[They’re making fun of their rear support? They can’t possibly be sane.]

The Fifth laughed condescendingly.

[Even though they won’t be able to fight decently without the support of the rear support. ……Lyle, Rondo and others came.]

When I turned around, Rondo-san and others are coming this way.

.

We exchanged information while eating.

We are eating vegetable and bean soup and hard bread. I soaked my bread into the soup while listening to Rondo-san and others talking.

Ralph-san is looking dissatisfied while Rachel-san is looking a bit disgruntled.

Rondo-san is telling me the information he gathered with a serious expression.

"About the adventurer party that is taught by that person called Dalel, their name seems to be Sword Wings. Every day they are treating the adventurers challenging the dungeon to alcohol and food. It seems those adventures are the one getting in our way."

Ralph-san roughly drank down the soup and put the bowl hard on the table.

"Breaking the rule is like it’s obvious! It’s just us who are protecting the rule like idiot. Those guys must be laughing knowing that!"

Rachel-san also seemed to be upset. She is desperately telling us while moving both her hands.

"It’s really the worst! Even that Sword whatever who has things going well for them is also tacitly involved with the rule breaking because they’re treating those guys with alcohol and food so they won’t get hindered! This is making us looking like idiot!"

The Sixth is grinning while,

[This is that kind of place. It can’t be helped.]

The Seventh was also laughing.

[Isn’t that right. There is a saying that when entering a village do as the villagers do. It’s Lyle and others who are in the wrong. However──]

The Third spoke with a low voice.

[Then, it’s also fine for us to give them payback. No, in the first place it’s also fine to tear down the premise.]

The ancestors silently, and cunningly worked their serpentine wisdom.

I continued talking with Rondo-san.

"Is there anything else that you noticed?"

Rondo-san nodded.

"That post exchange merchant. Old man Byron was it? I talked with that person but, it seems that the earning from this dungeon is really good. He told me that we should use money like mad in this kind of time. ……But, those are words from a merchant so I don’t know whether it’s really true or not."

Rachel-san put her elbow on the table and taught me what kind of items came out from the dungeon’s treasure box.

"I’m told that the treasure boxes here gives armor related things, then gold coin, silver coin, and sometimes copper coin will also come out. It’s mysterious isn’t it, why is that kind of thing appear inside a dungeon that has just been born? Even though I heard that dungeon will eat a lot of humans, then the dungeon will spit out the money and tools of those people into treasure boxes."

Thinking back that’s certainly mysterious. Not a lot of people has died yet. No, since it was discovered there isn’t even a single person yet that died inside, so how can those kinds of things get out from the treasure boxes inside?

Novem answered my doubt.

"……Each dungeon has their own characteristic, all dungeon is different from each other, but all of them are also the same dungeon. That was the theory I read from book. It’s a theory that isn’t really considered but, based from what Rachel-san’s story, I think that theory might be possibly be true."

Ralph-san is interested at Novem’s talk.

"Different and yet the same, what does that mean?"

Novem explained in detail.

"Dungeons are born in various place in various shape. But, the theory said that all of those dungeons are connected. For example, an adventurer is defeated in dungeon A, and the money and equipment in his possession are absorbed by the dungeon. Even though those things don’t get discovered in dungeon A, they can be found at another dungeon B. That’s the theory."

Ralph-san folded his arms and fell into thought. It seems he isn’t good with difficult talk. On the other hand, Rondo-san is listening intently to Novem’s explanation.

"That’s certainly interesting. If dungeons are all connected somewhere, then it can be explained how treasure box can appear even in a new dungeon. Even so, it’s a terrible story that dungeon is absorbing the belonging along with the corpse. If there is any exception, there is only the guild card isn’t it?"

Guild card──it’s the mysterious card created by adventurer guild that the dungeon cannot absorb. Everything other than that will get absorbed by dungeon in most case it seems.

I heard that’s the reason the inside of dungeon doesn’t get overflowing with corpse and trash.

While everyone is getting excited with such talk, Eva-san who finished her food looked at us and said a sentence.

"And, is that talk related to earning money?"

……It’s not.

Everyone is pulled back into reality and looks like they’re really at their wits’ end. I finished asking about the information they gathered and then I also told them about the information that my group gathered.

And then, we returned to the tent in order to take turn guarding the luggage with Aria-san, Sophia-san, and Zelphy-san.

.

──Sword Wings inside the dungeon.

The lightly armored comrade who went for scouting returned back.

Rex who was waiting at the passage asked the result of the scouting.

"How is it?"

"There’re five monsters inside the room ahead. I could also see goblins sporadically at the passage slightly ahead from here. They might join the fight if we enter the room and it turn into battle."

The warriors who were carrying shield stood in front of the party and watched the surrounding vigilantly. In the middle of that, Rex spread open his map and checked the passage and room.

It was a map even more detailed than the guild's map that he purchased from the Centralle's adventurer by paying gold coin……though in the end the quality was only at the level of better than the guild's, even so that was enough.

"……We'll fight. Two men will stay at the entrance to stand guard against monster. The rest will face the monsters inside the room. It's possible there is a treasure box inside. It will be annoying to pass it up."

Rex glanced at Dalel, but as expected he didn't show any sign of giving advice.

(Has he nothing to teach us, or perhaps there is other reason……fine. Then, we'll show result and make him recognize us.)

Rex prepared their weapon and then started moving.

The warriors with large shield went ahead, then in front of the room the members with light equipment checked inside the room. It seemed the monsters hadn't noticed them.

The lightly equipped member signaled with his hand. Rex nodded and raised his hand where everyone could see.

The warriors with large shield rushed into the room simultaneously at the forefront, while one other warrior with a large shield stayed in position at the entrance of the room. Then just as planned one other person also stood in guard.

"Yosh, bring them down all at once!"

A male magician fired a basic magic that was called bullet type at a goblin. When the goblin flinched, a big and sinister wasp made sound with its wings and attacked the party.

Rex didn’t falter and blocked the wasp’s charge with his shield while his right hand held up his sword. He struck down the wasp to the ground, then without pause he stepped hard on the monster and choked the life out of it.

The other party members were also facing monsters. A goblin headed toward Dalel with unknown thinking and it was stabbed with a thrust of spear.

(His movement is good as usual.)

After being shown the movement of veteran that had no wasted motion, Rex immediately checked the surrounding.

The area near the entrance was quiet.

"Any monster?"

His party member immediately replied.

"They don’t seem to be coming."

Rex told him to continue guarding the door, then he along with his remaining comrades stripped the magic stone and material from the monsters. And then, they confirmed the existence of treasure box.

Rex was also looking carefully at the wall searching for treasure box.

"There is!"

One person raised his voice happily. Rex and others looked that way. Several branches were forming round shape as though hiding something within their wrapping.

"You found it!"

When Rex headed that way, his comrade took out a short sword and pried open the treasure box.

"Don’t harm the inside."

"I know, already."

Like that a leather bag came out from inside the treasure box. Its opening was tied with a string. They opened the string and checked the content.

Several gold coins and dozens of silver coins. And then a few copper coins.

It might be the wallet of someone who entered a dungeon. But, such thing didn’t matter for Rex and others.

"Yosh! With this we fulfilled the quota too this time."

Rex and others decided a certain amount as the quota that they had to earn each time they challenged the dungeon. He tightly grasped the leather bag and called the supporter who carried the luggage.

The supporter who was carrying a large rucksack on his bag had a lantern hanging from his waist. He also carried various luggage. He was an essential member who supported everyone.

"Just in case keep it in different place from the rucksack. Don’t drop it okay?"

The supporter laughed.

"Naturally."

The supporter didn’t participate in battle, but he was still an important comrade. Rex treated him the same like his other comrades.

The male magician called at Rex.

"My bad. Two or three more shots are my limit. I’m also tired. Tomorrow might be too hard for me."

Rex nodded hearing that.

"Got it. Take a rest tomorrow. Also, save your magic as much as possible. We might need to count on you when an orc come out."

Like that, they finished collecting magic stone and material before taking a bit of rest. Then they immediately resumed moving to the next place──.

.

The afternoon of the fifth day.

After returning to the tent, I asked Novem to guard the luggage and slept for a bit.

Actually it’s for the sake of sending my consciousness inside the Jewel, but it only looks like I’m sleeping from the view of the people around me.

The ancestors are inside the room of round table. They are folding their arms and talking about the plan ahead──.

[Sword Wings huh. Why are feathers growing from the sword's guard? Does it has the meaning of feathered sword or something?]

Those words that the Second said became the trigger and the topic of their talk became about the party name.

The Third raised his face slightly and thought.

[I somehow understand what you want to say. Well, it's just a party name so isn't it fine? Or rather, I think the name feels fresh.]

The Fourth doesn't look really interested.

[It doesn't really matter right? I think it's a trite name though.]

The Fifth didn't look curious, but he still expressed his own opinion.

[It feels like they're trying too hard in thinking the name.]

As for the Sixth,

[The name is a bit too flashy, even if they called themselves Sword Wings, but with their size……also not all of them is using sword, so it's a bit…]

The Seventh snorted.

[They can't live up to their name, what's more they tried too hard in thinking up the name. That's a painful name. As I thought, adventurer don't have any good taste.]

Each of them expressed their thought about the party name. But, the Third who said the name was fresh and the Fourth who said it was normal complained at the Seventh.

[They have no good taste? Furthermore it's a painful name you say, what do you mean by that?]

[It's a normal name. Is it necessary to insult it like that?]

The Seventh also doesn’t draw back.

[It’s a fail. Absolutely fail. I can’t believe it. Bluntly speaking it’s a painful name.]

Because each of the ancestors lived in different era, their thought also differed from each other. The Second seemed unable to understand the name. The Fifth only felt that the name is a bit out of place. The Sixth thought that the name is strange, while the Seventh declared that the name is painful and got into argument with the Third and the Fourth.

The Sixth laughed.

[Perhaps it’ll be different if they got more famous, but at their current level the name make it sounds like they’re putting on airs! Lyle, you too be careful when thinking up your party name.]

Everyone’s gaze gathered on me. But, if I can say something then the name Sword Wings……doesn’t sound that bad.

No, that’s not it! Right now isn’t the time for this kind of talk.

"Err, more importantly if everyone can tell me about the plan for the current situation……"

Everyone looked at me as though saying "Read the atmosphere", after that the Third opened his mouth reluctantly.

[Now then, we’ve gathered some information, so I guess it’s time to act now. Just watching like this is also boring.]

The Fourth nodded.

[That’s right. At this rate we’ll get into the red, in addition this’ll only be a waste of time. Now then, what is everyone’s opinion?]

The Fifth opened his mouth.

[Ignore the worthless bunch that is entering the dungeon.]

For the Fifth, there was no option of currying favor to the adventurer parties who are breaking the rule as they please.

The Sixth grinned.

[If you want to curry favor to someone, then do it to the rear support, what's more do it to all of them.]

The Second snapped his fingers. It seems he is also of the same opinion.

[I also agree with that opinion. Also. Lyle……let's train your whole party to use the Arts.]

The Seventh put his hand on his chin and raised the corner of his mouth.

[We have to make them realize that the people giving support from behind the scene are far more rather than the adventurers who are fighting. It's troubling that there're a lot of adventurers who know no manner.]

The ancestors are laughing with low voice. Wickedness can even be felt from their smile.

Is it just my imagination that they are looking like bad guys? I can't help but feeling sympathy for the adventurers challenging the dungeon.

Chapter 36 – Reversal Move

"……Ha?"

Right now I'm astonished from hearing the ancestors' plan to break through the current situation.

The Third tilted his head.

[Eh? You still haven't noticed from the flow of events until now?]

I shook my head, then I racked my brain and spoke the strategy of the ancestors.

"What do you mean that rather than the dungeon, what I should conquer is the whole rear support instead? Err, we came here to conquer the dungeon right? Right-!?"

The Fifth sighed while looking at me, then he explained indifferently.

[That's why, we will make the rear support to back up Lyle for that sake. Listen, you guys can fight because there are personnel supporting you properly from the back. Certainly the guys risking their lives to fight inside the dungeon are the stars, but that doesn't mean you can make light of the rear support.]

The Sixth stroked his beard while,

[The adventurers challenging the dungeon, their quality is really low. The skilled guys are dealing with the other dungeon's subjugation, and the guys here are only a gathering of the leftovers. They aren't united, on top of that there are too many guys who don't understand what's important. Rather than currying favor to those kind of guys, don't you think that it's better to make the whole rear support into your ally?]

In order to have an easy time earning money──by making an environment where the adventurers could concentrate on subjugating the dungeon, what should be conquered wasn't the dungeon's inside, but the outside. That's what the ancestors said.

The Fourth slightly pushed up his glasses with his index finger to fix its position, then the lenses glinted eerily.

[Now then, the information gathering is for this. The situation is just as we expected to a certain degree, but the problem is how much we can earn from the dungeon subjugation this time.]

The Second opened his mouth full of confidence.

[I guarantee it. My instinct is duller compared to my father, but I believe it's sharper compared to other people. If I have to say more, based on my experience, I think the dungeon this time……is a jackpot. It will be profitable. This dungeon will be profitable for sure!]

Hearing the Second's words, the Fourth nodded happily.

[That's really great. With that it means that we can invest all our money into this.]

The Seventh was surprised that the cheapskate Fourth said that.

[It's also feels uncomfortable that the Fourth isn't being frugal like usual.]

The Fourth immediately objected.

[Please don't misunderstand me. If I think that it will be profitable then I won't be frugal in investing. To earn a lot sometimes you cannot be slow and steady. Investing a large amount of fund boldly is also important. Well, this amount cannot be said as large compared to my time as feudal lord though.]

The Fifth looked at me and taught me something with a small voice.

[Lyle, he said that but, the Fourth is a guy who loved counting gold coins one by one and putting them inside his vault. Even in the matter of using large money, if mama wasn't there then he was a slow and steady bastard who absolutely wouldn't carry out the plan.]

The Fifth calling his mother as mama seemed to be something that he was forced to do. And then, the Fourth was also unable to go against that "mama".

Just what kind of amazing woman was she? Don't tell me, it was that kind girl in Eva-san's story? ……No way. The era was different. That girl was a person of an even older time.

The Fourth pointed at us.

[You there, you're noisy! ……Now then, let's decide what has to be prepared based on the fund that can be used at present. First, it's food ingredients.]

The Third smiled.

[Sweets will be good too. I want some focus on the children and females.]

The Sixth was high-spirited.

[Alcohol! Let's buy the whole barrel of it.]

The Fifth was calm.

[I also want some gold coins and silver coins to hire the elves.]

The Seventh folded his hands and leaned on the chair's back.

[I think it will be more effective if contacting Hawkins is split into two times. In that case, let's also hire the prostitutes. Alcohol, woman, food……those are the standard. Hmm, let's also call out to the guys operating the stalls. You will incur their animosity if you leave them out while the others are earning money.]

While I'm unable to follow with the talk, the Second approached me and put his hand on my shoulder.

[Lyle, you come this way. I'll teach you……the second stage of my Art. Also, you guys will take a rest from dungeon subjugation tomorrow and the day after it.]

I'm astonished hearing the Second's words.

"……That's, is it really okay?"

Even though we want to prioritize the dungeon subjugation, but we're going to rest for three consecutive days from doing that essential dungeon subjugation……is this not mistaken?

The Second looked at me.

[What, are you worried? Don't worry. It will absolutely go well. I'll go ahead.]

The Second encouraged me like that──recently, I have the feeling that he is behaving especially cheerfully. When the Second headed to his room of memories, the Third looked at the door where the Second disappeared into.

[……Go over there. You see, the Second is really worried about Lyle. Because the First is gone, he forced himself to be lively to cheer you up.]

At first, the Second talked fewer. He was a silent man dressed like a hunter. Certainly compared to before it felt like he is forcing himself somewhat to increase the frequency of his talk.

I started walking towards the Second's room of memories.

.

The Second's room of memories is similar to the First's room.

But, the scenery of the village is more well-ordered compared to the First's era. The fields that were positioned messily are now arranged nicely.

While I’m walking and watching that scenery, I arrive at an open space. Over there several bows and arrows are prepared. They felt like they were habitually used.

The Second who is waiting for me beckoned with his hand.

[This way.]

I headed to the Second’s position in a run, then the Second put his hand on his waist and started teaching me his Art.

[Now then, regarding my Art, basically my Art is “to make other people become able to use Arts”. Bluntly speaking, other people say that the extra capability of the Art is more amazing but, the Art itself is useful in its own way.]

The Second’s Art is relatively plain. It’s something to make other people become able to use the user’s Arts.

But, what’s amazing about it is its side effect that causes the user to be able to accurately perceive the distance between him and the target in order to apply the Art to other people. The user will be able to grasp the situation within a spherical shaped area that is centered around themselves.

If I have to say, using this Art I can grasp the situation within the range of a spherical area around me even with my eyes closed. Even having an eye at the back of your head cannot be compared with it.

The name of such Art is All.

"When it becomes the second stage it will become more amazing won’t it?"

[Well, that’s right. It’s plain compared to Lyle’s Art though.]

The Second looked at me and made a really conflicted face.

Yes, my Art……the name appeared clearly after my Growth experience.

Its name is Experience──it's an Art that makes me able to obtain more experience. But, even if I'm told that I can obtain that experience a lot more, how great the effect is, and how far the effect reached? I don't understand them clearly except for some vague idea.

It's continually active, and I understand that its effect is exerted to the surroundings including me but……it's unclear whether its effect is small or big.

Because of that, even after the name became clear and I understood the effect, I'm unable to keenly feel its benefits like the Arts of the ancestors.

The ancestors said that it seems to be "an Art in order to advance even further". It's an Art of growth enhancement that is really hard to describe.

"Even if I'm told that it's extraordinary, I don't even know how much effect it has. And, about the Second's Art?"

The Second scratched his cheek with his finger. He looks a bit embarrassed, or perhaps shy.

[In my case, there isn't that much change even in its second stage. But, the distance where you grasp the space increased, and you can make a group become able to use Arts all at once. Also, you will be able to understand the condition of the enemy and ally within the space somehow.]

"Somehow? That's really vague."

[That's~, it's faster to experience it rather than hearing an explanation. Well, the way to use it is the same like the first stage. Try to make your field of vision wider……no, try to grasp your surroundings until farther away. The Art's name is Field.]

I closed my eyes just like I'm told and used the Second's Art All. After that I tried to look even further ahead……to grasp the surrounding until far away and whispered the name.

"Field."

I felt the spherical space around me widening. The space is spreading to fully envelop the open space where the Second and I are standing.

When I closed my eyes, it felt like I can listen to my heartbeat.

And then, the Second felt like a lump of mana to me……I'm able to clearly grasp that he isn't human.

Even with my eyes closed I can understand that the Second is smiling.

[So you get it? That's how it is. Even so, you learned it really quickly. Oyaji also said it but, Lyle……you're amazing.]

When I opened my eyes, the Second is smiling just as I thought. I felt strangely embarrassed.

"Is, that so? I don't understand it myself."

The Second made a face that looked troubled but also happy.

[You can stand to be a bit more confident though. Now then, let's talk about the continuation of before. The reason why I taught you the second stage at this time, and then the reason why we told you to take a day off for two days.]

I lent my ears towards the Second's words. What kind of reason necessitated us to take a day off for two more days?

[It's simple. Within the remaining two days, you'll use one day to teach everyone so they can use the Fourth's Art, Speed using my Art just now. Then you all will use that to rush inside the dungeon until the middle area in one go. You'll make a killing there.]

This time, the scale of the dungeon is small but its size is quite wide. It's considered to be difficult to reach the deepest room within one day, and the location of the deepest room itself is also unknown.

And so, it was decided that the conquering policy was to do it slowly with all adventurers needing to come back every day.

It seemed the reason this policy was taken was also because there was no party with the strength that was able to conquer the labyrinth in one go.

"Err, then what about the remaining one day?"

[That’s obvious. You will carry out the maneuvering to win over the guys in charge of the rear support. Well, although I said that but what you’re going to do is only procuring food and gathering manpower.]

I sighed.

[What? You don’t want to do it?]

"Ah, that’s not it. Even though we gathered here to subjugate a dungeon, we’re getting in the way of each other instead. This is really different from my imagination."

Even though a large scale group is gathered like this because it’s impossible to subjugate the dungeon individually, they are sabotaging each other instead. And then, I’m also going to do the same thing after this.

I cannot accept it emotionally no matter what.

"I won’t ask them to get along better with each other but, it’ll be great if they can at least follow the rules."

Then the Second told me a certain sentence.

He looked at the tranquil village while looking somewhat sad.

[Lyle……humans always fight, no matter when, where, who, no matter what kind of situation it is, and no matter what kind of reason they have. We’re that kind of creature.]

I expressed my impression honestly.

"That’s, sad somehow."

The Second made a small smile.

[Yeah, you’re right. But you better remember it. Well, this might be mere consolation but, perhaps it’s exactly because of that that people who can achieve something in groups look excessively noble.]

The Second looked embarrassed while saying "As I thought forget what I said just now. I’m not suited to saying that." and sent me out from the room of memories.

.

When I opened my eyes, it’s already evening.

Aria-san and others already returned, while Rondo-san’s party is also preparing the campfire and other things before it became dark.

"Achieving something with a group is noble, is it."

I muttered that. Inside the tent, Eva-san is hugging a pillow sleepily. It seems she was also taking a nap like me.

"Fue? Wha, what?"

From how she is wiping her mouth, perhaps she was drooling. What should I say here…….

"I’m just talking to myself. Eva-san, you’re going to stay over today too aren’t you? Let’s have dinner together."

Eva-san showed a bright grin while her hair is slightly disheveled. It’s not the alluring adult smile that she showed on the day when we first met, but a smile that looked like a child.

"Plea~se. Ah, I won’t accept it for free. I’ll also sing today, and tell stories and show performance too──"

She spoke that far, so I asked her to please do so.

"Then please do. But, this time it will be a bit large-scale, so I’ll pay you the compensation."

Hearing the word compensation, Eva-san’s eyes opened wide and she smiled. She joined her hands together in front of her face.

"I'll listen to what you have to say!"

Her expression kept changing frequently. She is a person whose emotion easily came to the surface. I smiled wryly while calling out to Novem who is outside.

.

Night.

We are surrounding the campfire near the tent. Everyone who heard what I said is completely silent.

Ralph-san's mouth was wide open. Rachel-san spilled her tea and she panicked.

Eva-san is looking at me with an excited gaze.

Zelphy-san is covering her face with her left hand. Aria-san and Sophia-san looked at each other, while Novem is the only one who looked at me and nodded.

Rondo-san asked me in representation of everyone.

"Err, in other words……we won't enter the dungeon for a while and act to win over the rear support group, that's what you're saying?"

I nodded.

"Yes. At this rate we won't be able to earn money no matter what. In that case, I think we should make one last gamble. At this rate we will only end up participating in the dungeon subjugation without obtaining any experience at all. That's the only thing that I can't accept."

I recalled what the ancestors said and used that as the reason for my comrades.

Ralph-san stood up.

"Bu, but. Certainly that's gonna be amazing if we can do that. It'll be amazing but……where will we get the money for that huh? Besides, I can't even imagine it but there is no guarantee that we will be able to obtain that much money to replace the investment. Rather than us, it'll be you guys who……"

Ralph-san's opinion is correct. And then, he is concerned for us. Depending on our method, it feels like we'll be able to obtain results even with less work. However, this matter is already decided……no, it's settled already.

The ancestors inside the Jewel have moved and thought up a plan already. Those people are already high spirited.

Towards Ralph-san, the Third,

[This kid, his appearance is like a bandit or delinquent but, he is kind. He's a good kid.]

Evaluating him like that. Certainly, from a glance Ralph-san's appearance is scary but, he is really kind in a lot of cases.

I turned my gaze to Novem. Novem nodded and took out several leather bags. Those bags are filled with a lot of golden coins……she placed them on the table.

"This is the reward we received from the feudal lord's request. We'll use this to pull the whole rear support group to our side. It's fine, my instincts……it tells me that if it's this dungeon then we can make even."

I told everyone confidently with a feeling like I'm tricking even myself.

"We can't let go of this chance. Failure is still better rather than simply passing time idly! So? Will you all cooperate with my strategy?"

Rondo-san suddenly laughed. Everyone looked at Rondo-san in surprise.

Ralph-san called to him worriedly.

"Rondo? Are you going crazy?"

"No, I'm not. I'm sane here. But, to think that I'll do something crazy while being sane……Lyle-kun is really interesting. Okay. I'll cooperate with this plan. Certainly at this rate we will obtain nothing, then there will be no meaning going through that much trouble to participate in this dungeon subjugation. Besides, I want to give a scare to those guys breaking the rules inside the dungeon……no, I want to pay back those guys who kept hindering us."

He spoke in a really bold way unlike his usual impression of a good young man. When he said that he want to pay back the guys he didn't like, Ralph-san also nodded. Rachel-san's cheeks reddened seeing Rondo-san who is different from usual.

I looked at Rondo-san and smiled.

"That's great. Then let's start."

Then, Zelphy-san seemed unable to hold herself back anymore and put a stop to it.

"Wait a second, Lyle. As expected even if you use that much money, the prospect of you being able to break even is──"

I looked back towards Zelphy-san.

"I think there is some kind of reason that Zelphy-san was staying quiet but, if that's the case then please just keep watching till the end. Zelphy-san, it's not like I'm planning to cross a dangerous bridge. Rather, what I'm going to do is to strengthen the bridge into a solid stone bridge, and then reinforce it further to confirm our safety. An adventurer must not be adventurous, isn't that right?"

Yes, we're going to act in order to enhance the rear support and create a situation that is advantageous for ourselves.

Zelphy-san closed her mouth, after that she complained "Damn kid showing motivation only at this kind of time" but she didn’t have any intention to stop us anymore.

"Now then, let’s move flashily starting from tomorrow."

.

The next day, we who have decided the division of roles went around from early in the morning carrying out our respective roles.

Early in the morning……the first thing I did is calling out to Hawkins-san in the middle of his breakfast.

I sat down near Hawkins-san and also started eating breakfast.

"Oh, what’s the matter Lyle-kun?"

"Hawkins-san, as I thought the meal here isn’t popular isn’t it? I understand that the cook is doing his best but, the ingredients are bad and he can’t help it……"

Hawkins-san smiled bitterly.

"That’s painful to hear. But, it’s a fact that the guild couldn’t secure enough ingredients because of the suddenness of this matter. Let me apologize for this."

I switched the topic.

"Actually we’re going to hold a little party. Will Hawkins-san come too?"

Then Hawkins-san’s expression turned grave.

"I’ll consider it as just a simple invitation. That kind of conduct towards a guild staff isn’t recommended. Please be careful from now on. Also, you can talk to me if there is something. Even without you currying favor with me, I’ll do it if it’s within the range of my job."

Surprisingly I got scolded. The Third is also greatly happy with this.

[As expected from our Hawkins-kun! He’s a man who won’t accept any bribe, what’s more he’ll do his job properly! As expected! ……Compared to him that Santoa-chan…]

The Fifth muttered.

[I want someone like him as a subordinate.]

The Sixth looked balking.

[Is that so? I think someone who is too serious is boring.]

The Fifth immediately talked back to the Sixth.

[Someone serious like Hawkins is just right for a delinquent like you.]

I apologized to Hawkins-san while consulting about the matter of Santoa-san.

"I apologize, that was rude of me. Actually I got hated by Santoa-san. It’s troubling that she always moves my turn for last, that’s why I wished to ask if Hawkins-san can perhaps say something to her."

Then Hawkins-san rubbed the corner of his eyes and apologized.

"That’s……that’s a blunder from our side. I will properly warn her. Actually I want to do the reception work myself but, the other staff are also busy so……I’m sorry."

After that we chatted for a bit before I parted from Hawkins-san. At the end.

"Ah, also about the party, please come if you feel like it."

I said that with a smile. Hawkins-san made a troubled smile at that.

.

The next place I’m going to is the place of the post exchange merchant Byron-jiisan.

I met up with Aria-san, Zelphy-san, and Sophia-san who had gone to talk with the cook beforehand and confirmed the situation.

"How is it going?"

Aria-san made a peace sign and answered full of confidence.

"Big success! He said that he will do it if we can prepare the material. He also said that he doesn't need any additional pay."

Sophia-san gave her report seriously.

"He looked really aggravated. Well, the person himself has done his best after all……"

I nodded in satisfaction hearing that and headed to Byron-san's place with the four of us. Zelphy-san looked reluctant.

Byron-jiisan is opening his stall near a large wagon. When we approached him, he rubbed his hands together while greeting us with a smile.

"Welcome. Oh, so you finally showed your face here. Now then, what kind of business──"

I didn't let him speak to finish and placed a leather bag that is filled with gold coins on the counter in front of Byron-jiisan.

"……Dear customer, what do you wish to buy?"

"I want various things. First I want to procure various kinds of spices and flavoring and a great amount of ingredients. I want an amount that will be enough for all the people participating in the dungeon subjugation until it is over."

Byron-jiisan's gaze turned sharp and he fixed his hat.

"Oh dear, that's really generous. If you wish to improve the food conditions, I can call out to the people manning the stalls──"

"I’m using them through a different channel. I want you to hand the necessary ingredients to the cook. After that, this is the advance payment. I still have several more bags like this."

Byron-jiisan fell into thought. Before long he formed a smile which became a slightly scary smile at the end.

"The stock I have at hand won’t even last three days. I’ll replenish it later but, is there anything else that you need?"

"Then can you give me some candies? It will be great if you can give me candies that are filled with various things and can be divided to smaller portion. I’m thinking to distribute them. Also I’ll buy alcohol, the whole barrel of it. I’m thinking to treat everyone."

The rubbing of Byron-jiisan’s hands are getting faster.

"Great purchase! Is there anything else?"

"I also want to hire the prostitutes as helpers. Well, for around two days? I’ll hire all of them but, will there be a problem?"

Byron-jiisan’s expression became conflicted hearing this.

"There are also some girls who have frequent customer, so for this one it will depend individually on them. But, I think you’ll be able to hire most of them. However, you will need three or four more bags like this for that though?"

I nodded with a smile.

"Very good. It’s just as I expected."

Byron-jiisan looked at me and cleared his throat.

"No, I’m sorry. I still haven’t calculated everything in detail. So perhaps the price might be a bit more──"

The Fourth raised his voice inside the Jewel here.

[Okay, no lying. We already learned the price of the merchandises that are sold here, and also the normal price of buying them. There is

no way the price will change that greatly in just a few days. Don’t allow him to rip you off further than this.]

I brought my face closer to Byron-ojiisan.

"I already asked my friend about the price of the merchandise here. Even if the price has changed somewhat……don’t tell me that you will need more money than this?"

Byron-jiisan’s expression twisted and he cursed at me.

"What, so you already investigated it from the start. Or perhaps it’s a hint from Zelphy?"

Zelphy-san denied it in irritation.

"You think I’ll remember every single price of the items at your place huh! It’s this guy who’s strange."

Zelphy-san called me strange. I think that’s a bit terrible.

"What will you do? This shouldn’t be bad business for you too. Am I wrong? Or perhaps, you want to try raising the price? That’s fine. I received quite a lot as reward from Ventra-san after all."

I showed an attitude that it’s fine if that’s what he’s going to do. I also mentioned the name of the feudal lord Ventra-san. If I made it sound like I’m personally acquainted with the feudal lord, it will become quite the threat.

Byron-jiisan shrugged.

"Of course I’ll comply with the transaction. I’m a merchant after all. Anyway, I’ll go to the cook’s place and confirm various things. Also, even if I hand him the ingredients it will be meaningless if there is no tools to cook them. I’ll charge for those too."

Byron-jiisan’s business spirit was deserving respect in some way.

"Please take care of it. Tell me the price later."

Byron-jiisan said "You too, prepare the money properly" before going to the cook’s place immediately. He left without delay.

.

──Eva was pulling Novem’s hand and came to the tent where the elf entertainers were staying at.

They who were used to travel were also used to living in a tent unlike the others.

A female elf who noticed Eva waved her hand.

"What, you threw in the towel already and came to seek help from us? The princess of Nihil is lacking in guts."

She teased Eva with a smile.

Eva who was teased wasn’t bothered with it. Far from that, she responded to the woman with a haughty attitude.

"My, is it alright for you to say that to me? Even though I came here bringing a customer."

‘Ohohoho’, Eva laughed dramatically. The woman bowed her head to her.

"As expected from the princess. So you’re bringing work to us with that negotiation skill! I’m relieved that you aren’t just a freeloader!"

"Wait! What do you mean by freeloader!"

Eva stopped her cheap acting and complained to the woman. Then several elves came out from the tent.

"A customer?"

Novem bowed beautifully to the elves. And then she made a work request to the elves.

(So Eva-san is Nihil’s princess……a blood relative of its chief. That’s why……)

Novem guessed Eva’s circumstance in her heart while opening her mouth.

"Actually there is something that I wish to request from everyone. Our leader will hold a lavish banquet, so I want to ask everyone to advertise it and display your performance in that banquet. This will be the reward."

Saying that, Novem showed a small bag that was filled with gold coins. The male elf who was the representative accepted it and his eyes turned round.

Behind him a female elf said "Wow, amazing" and whistled.

"This much? But, we cannot accept this much money for a day’s work──"

"It’s not for one day’s work. After the banquet I wish for everyone to indirectly advertise that it’s our leader who improved the food condition. Also, it will be great if everyone can exaggerate it somewhat."

What Lyle sought from the elves was a circulation of a rumor. The elves nodded after being told to indirectly spread the rumor──the fact while they were doing their performance.

It wasn’t like they were told to cause misfortune to someone. If it was just that much then it was an easy work for the elves.

"Understood. We will do everything we can. By the way, what kind of person is the leader?"

Novem was a bit troubled by the question from the elf’s representative.

(Overly dramatizing this won’t be good, but I also want to make the rumor to be a bit proper here.)

While Novem was troubled thinking about Lyle, Eva raised her hand. Furthermore she looked really excited.

"I was staying with them for these several days so I know him! It’s amazing, he is a guy that is like a main character in a story! And yet he is also able to prepare the story’s punch line. He’s a man who can do all roles from main character role until comedian role! A human like Lyle is really rare."

Hearing that the elves got excited. The representative asked Eva for details. The eyes of the elves were gleaming brightly from being able to hear a story that sounded interesting.

"Yosh, then let’s hear the details. Information is also important for doing the work after all. Now, let’s hear it inside the tent! Oi, someone prepare tea and snacks. Now, you too! This is an important matter in order to do the work well after all!"

"Ye, yes."

Novem was pressured by the passion of the elves and got dragged into the tent.

(What to do? The elves are getting this fired up……I hope it won’t become a problem.)

Novem vanished into the tent while feeling bewildered. After that, she wasn’t let go until evening──

Chapter 37 – Takeover

The tent where the adventurers from Centralle were staying at is larger and better made compared to the others.

The reason I came here was because I heard that I could obtain a map with better detail compared to the map that the guild provided.

I have no need for it because I have the Fifth and the Sixth's Arts, but the problem is it's concerning how the information of the map is. Well, it's the ancestors who are bothered though.

"Is there any need to come here even though we are busy preparing various things?"

After I leaked out my dissatisfaction, the Fifth told me to focus myself.

[We're going to clear up just how great the ability of a magic tool is. This is information gathering for the future. I also want to take a look at the adventurers from Centralle while we're at it.]

I called out in front of the tent and waited for a reply. After a while a voice said "Enter" so I entered inside the tent.

The interior design of the inside was also extravagant. Several adventurers were sitting on chairs and passing their time each to their own liking.

Strange shaped tools with measuring functions are lined up. It's unclear whether they're magic tools or just normal tools. There is a tool with a gem embedded into it. Is it just decoration or is there a meaning to it……I'm curious. Among the tools there is also one with a gem emitting a mysterious light embedded on it.

"Excuse me――"

"If you want a detailed map then it will be one gold coin. The content is changing every day. Come and buy it every few days."

My words got interrupted. One of them handed me a paper while I'm feeling bewildered. After I paid one gold coin and obtained the map, the senior adventurer moved his head slightly, telling me to get out with his gesture.

They don't look like they will listen to anything at all.

The Seventh is irritated.

[Lowly adventurers dare to put on airs with that appearance of an upstart.]

The Second started talking in deep interest.

[Are they magic tools? There are a lot of tools with gems embedded into them. Every single one looks expensive, but the guys using them don't look strong. Lyle can win if both sides are at their base state I think? Well, they look quite experienced but, it's bothering me that they don't look motivated.]

In other words, it seems that I cannot win against them who have their whole body equipped with magic tools.

I said my thanks and exited the tent. Then I immediately opened the map. But, I tilted my head seeing the inside. Certainly it's more detailed compared to the guild's map, but that's all.

The Arts of the Fifth and the Sixth are far more amazing than this.

However the Fifth is surprised.

[……So even magic tools can investigate this accurately. I wonder how expensive magic tools for investigation are.]

Then the Seventh answered.

[The magic tool itself is expensive, but the magic ore──an ore with mana dwelling inside it that becomes the mana source for the magic tool is also expensive. I heard that there are also magic tools that won't move without it. Those things are of a rare kind, so even the price of a single magic tool can be several hundred or several

thousand gold coins. The price can double if the magic ore is included.]

The Fourth is worrying while,

[Even so if we can obtain a map this detailed then……no, thinking of the talented person needed to operate it and the maintenance cost……I see, there is no way that there will be an adventurer in Dalien that can use these magic tools. The cost is just too much.]

The Sixth changed the direction of the talk at that timing.

[Now then Lyle! It's the time for the fun party. You need to have fun too! After all……it's from your money!]

No, it's not just my money but the money of all of us……well, doesn't matter. After coming this far I can only go forward. I folded the map and put it inside my pocket, then I returned to my tent.

.

The evening of the sixth day.

The elves are displaying their musical performance at the center of the campsite. The stalls are lining up food on plates one after another as though to use up their ingredients.

The prostitutes served the alcohol and entertained the people who worked hard at the rear support.

"Drink to your hearts content! This is the treat of the famous "Womanizer". Today you all drink and eat until your stomachs burst in order to clear up your everyday irritation!"

The men received alcohol from the prostitutes and happily ate the food lined up on the table. The children who are still young received juice.

The children of the elves brought candy that they distributed to their fellow children.

It's plainly a publicity stunt.

I thought that while looking at that situation from some distance away.

"Is it going well?"

The Second told me "No problem" and then pointed at the situation around. The adventurers who returned from the dungeon are dumbfounded. The prostitutes served alcohol even to them.

Everyone no matter who is served alcohol. And the food can be freely eaten.

"Why is there no limitation put in place?"

The Third answered my question.

[It’s troublesome to select the people one by one. Besides, it’s not like we want to crush them. After all they might attack you inside the dungeon if your corner them too much. Well, they’re low lives so they might still come at you no matter what though.]

The Sixth continued the explanation.

[Listen Lyle……our purpose isn’t to crush the other parties. We only want to take over the whole rear support!]

"That sounds really terrible in ear!"

We made the elves to advertise that it’s thanks to me the food situation is improved in order to make my popularity increase.

The Seventh urged me.

[Lyle, as the event’s host you have to get to the front. Sell your face and name in this chance. Declare that it’s you who is holding this banquet.]

I’m not enthusiastic but when I headed towards the banquet venue, Aria-san and the others are already waiting. I’m concerned with Novem whose hair is a bit disordered and her face looked tired, but my hands are pulled by Sophia-san and Rachel-san to the improvised stage.

The elves and prostitutes called out for everyone to look towards the stage. A lot of people’s gazes gathered on me.

I resolved myself and then put on a smile.

"Everyone, thanks for your hard work! We can fight like this is also thanks to everyone! Please have fun today. I’ll also prepare food and alcohol later for those who can’t be here because of their guard duty so don’t worry about that! Now, let’s have fun!"

Then a loud cheer burst out as though all their accumulated frustration until now was vented.

Everyone is scrambling for the food that is made by the cook whose cooking kept getting called bad until now every day. The cook had a wide smile on his face seeing that.

The adventurers who were made fun of that they are doing nothing but drawing water or doing chores are also getting lewd looks when the prostitutes serve them alcohol.

The young children who were taking care of the horses are eating sweets and juices while laughing with each other. Such scene is spreading. Among them there are the adventurers who entered the dungeon laughing scornfully and making fun of my bid at popularity.

I got down from the stage and met with Eva-san who has changed into a theatrical costume for her performance. Different from her usual loose outfit, the line of her body is completely visible with this outfit that stuck tightly to her skin.

Her shoulders, thighs, stomach, and some other places are visible. It’s troubling where to look at her.

"Lyle, thank you! With this I can also sing here. I never thought that the adventurer who was looking down at that time will prepare this kind of stage for me. That was truly a fateful encounter!"

Eva-san is exaggerating too much. I shrugged at her.

"We’re also helped. Please take care of the rumor okay?"

"Leave it to me. That kind of thing is the elves' specialty."

……Thinking carefully, isn't the capability of elves far surpassing the likes of spies? They went around all over the place gathering information, and it's also possible for them to circulate rumors. Their legs and moving pace are also fast which made them suited for battle too.

Elves are amazing.

Eva-san hugged at my back.

"More importantly, Lyle too, earn a lot from the dungeon subjugation this time. You need to recover at least half of the amount you spent."

I averted my gaze. It would depend on luck about that.

"……Ahaha, I'll do my best."

"Very good!"

After saying that, she continued "Listen to my singing okay" and went above to the stage. I waved my hand and saw her off from behind but…….

[Ah, I can see the inside of her skirt.]

[Isn't that a type of underwear that is alright even if it got seen? It's not stimulating at all.]

The Third and the Sixth's voices ruined the atmosphere.

.

The next day after the party, the morning of the seventh day.

I approached the place where Hawkins-san is having his meal. Hawkins-san sighed and looked at the dishes lined up on the table.

They aren’t only vegetables and beans, there is also rich soup with meat and freshly baked bread. There is also one other dish. It’s extravagant for a campsite meal.

"……I’m beaten. Now I can only accept it like this."

It’s everyday food so it can’t be called a bribe. However, there is no doubt that it’s thanks to me the food situation is resolved.

I grinned while sitting in front of Hawkins-san.

"Where did you learn this kind of method? I want to believe that it’s not from Zelphy-san."

It’s not from Zelphy-san, but from even worse people. Just how comfortable it would be if I can say something like that.

"Hawkins-san, actually I have a request."

Hawkins-san made a troubled face and said "If that’s something that I can do. However, if I can’t do it then when we return the guild will pay you the cost for this" so I nodded.

"First, can I ask the guild to warn everyone to thoroughly uphold the rules inside the dungeon?"

"……Well, if it’s only that much."

"Also, I’m being hated by Santoa-san, so I want to take care of the procedure ahead of everyone. Ah, we will return properly within the day, and we also won’t break the rules."

Hawkins-san looked slightly troubled, but he agreed with me.

"Is that all?"

"Yes, it’s enough with just that."

Hawkins-san looked at me with a doubting gaze. Perhaps he is thinking that I’m hiding something. My heart feels slightly pained that Hawkins-san is doubting me.

"No, that’s really all. It’s not like I’m planning to do anything bad."

"Even though you say that, I know of no one else except Lyle-kun who would hand over that much money to a post exchange merchant. Are you alright?"

What he meant by alright is will we be able to earn money properly? He must be wondering whether we are in money trouble right now.

"Yes, there is no problem. That money was mostly from me ripping off the feudal lord-sama anyway."

Hawkins-san covered his face with his right hand.

"You’ve become really tough compared to when we first met. I don’t know whether that is a good or bad thing."

I’ve known Hawkins-san since I first registered as an adventurer. Even though it’s only a few months ago, it felt like something from a really long time ago.

.

I assigned the seventh day for Art’s training, and we would do the dungeon subjugation for real starting from the eighth day.

The dungeon subjugation is scheduled for two weeks. It’s already approaching the second half.

The party members with me in the lead went running into the dungeon that had trees forming its walls. I checked the accurate map inside my head while heading towards the area pass the middle stage……the place that the adventurers still haven’t explored in one go while avoiding monsters as much as possible.

Although its scale is small as a dungeon, we ran through a spacious place without stopping. We entered a room that has no monster in it and took a rest right away.

Rachel-san is running out of breath and covered in sweat.

"Thi, this is, fast but, certainly it’s fast but it’s tiring."

Rondo-san also wiped his sweat.

"We have advanced really far but, it’s also amazing that we didn’t encounter any monsters until here."

Ralph-san thrust his spear on the ground and looked around.

"Besides, looks like we hit the jackpot."

Over there was an unnatural bulging on the wall──a rounded branches. It was a treasure box.

Naturally, we entered this room knowing there was such a thing inside. The Second explained full of confidence.

[For some reason, the treasure box’s content becomes better the deeper you go inside the dungeon. It seems like a method to invite people deeper and deeper, but something like that is unrelated with us. You just need to earn a profit from that.]

Zelphy-san walked forward and pried open the treasure box to give us an example. When we looked at the content, it’s filled with precious metal type items.

"It’s a ring. Furthermore it’s silver with a large gem attached. It will fetch several gold coins……no, perhaps it’ll be more than ten coins?"

We rejoiced knowing that our first treasure is worth quite much. Rondo-san and the others also high-fived.

Sophia-san let out a long sigh. She is relieved.

"I’m glad. I was a bit uneasy, what if there isn’t anything in it."

However, Zelphy-san poured cold water on us.

"Don’t be happy with just this much. Think about how much money you have wasted. You guys are still in the red with just this much. A big red!"

The Fourth is laughing inside the Jewel.

[Certainly we're in a terrible deficit, but it's possible to make it up from here on. An area that other adventurers still haven't entered……it's enough for us to make a killing.]

The Second gave me instruction.

[Lyle, recover around forty until fifty percent of the treasure boxes in this area. Don't take everything. Leave some for the others too.]

The Third is laughing.

[It will be interesting seeing them scrambling for those and having disputes between themselves. Now then, after resting go collect the treasures through the shortest route before returning. But you also have to prepare yourself for battle.]

On the map floating inside my head, red dots──monsters are moving around. By going through the shortest route and decreasing the number of battles to the utmost……we will enter battle three times at least.

I instructed everyone.

"We'll avoid battle as much as possible and prioritize collecting treasure boxes. Even so, please be prepared to fight at least three times. Before that, let's rest here."

Rachel-san sat down on the spot.

"No objection. I'm tired from running."

Sophia-san looked at me and seemed to want to say something. She has a hand axe hanging on her waist for battle in a narrow place. It seems she would fight using a hand axe when she couldn't use her battle axe.

"What's the matter?"

"I'm just thinking that Lyle-dono is finally showing motivation. Why didn't you take action earlier than this?"

Because the ancestors had fun watching us. I can’t possibly say something like that, so I turned my gaze to Zelphy-san.

"It seems that someone was planning various things so I thought of gauging the true intention first."

Zelphy-san sullenly looked aside. Sophia-san whispered into my ear.

"Was there something just as expected? She didn’t really tell us anything all this time. It’s too unnatural."

The Third guessed what Zelphy-san’s thinking is.

[Perhaps she wanted Lyle and the others to experience failure. After all, a bitter memory will last for long. Well, this time the priority is to experience a dungeon subjugation, so the failure experience will be set aside for later.]

I don’t want such experience to be waiting for me. Or rather, what do you mean by telling us to fail.

"It feels like she was waiting for us to fail. Perhaps it’s something like how even failure will be a good experience."

Sophia-san reached an understanding.

"Aah, that."

Then, Zelphy-san’s face went red and she pointed at me while trembling.

"You over there, you’re noisy! If you get it then staying quiet and not saying it in front of the person is kindness!"

Inside the Jewel, the ancestors gave few words to Zelphy-san.

[Our bad, getting made fun of is the duty of the junior.]

[Haha~, Zelphy-chan is cute isn’t she?]

[It’s completely transparent. Do it in a more skillful way.]

[Sorry that we aren’t kind.]

[I don’t even feel like acting kind to an unsexy woman!]

[Putting aside the Sixth, it’s your bad that your defense is weak. Start from the beginning diligently.]

The ancestors are harsh to Zelphy-san.

Rondo-san and the others also laugh at Zelphy-san. Sophia-san and I also laugh seeing the embarrassed Zelphy-san.

Like that we finished our rest and stood up before resuming our movement.

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"Wind Bullet!"

Rachel-san is being protected by Ralph-san at the corner of the passage while jumping out and launching magic. The monsters who waited over there in a group are flustered from suddenly getting attacked.

Ralph-san immediately rushed forward. We followed behind him.

"Look here, screw off you guysss!!"

He swung around his spear, catching multiple goblins and bug monsters in it, slashing and sending them flying. After Ralph-san’s wild brute force attack, Rondo-san unsheathed his sword and leaped forward.

The sword that is a magic tool played a sound that slightly echoed in the ear. It seems that it’s engraved with an Art that improved sharpness. Coupled with Rondo-san’s sword technique, the monsters are cut down in succession.

It’s surprising how he rushed between two goblins and cut them apart while passing them.

Zelphy-san is shocked seeing the three.

"This party is really into the offensive. You guys must get injured often right?"

Rondo-san wiped the blood that got caught on him and nodded in embarrassment before replying.

"You noticed? But, this is how we've done it all this time, so should I say that we have no other pattern or something."

The Fifth is exasperated.

[It'll be dangerous if they got ambushed. Add more people into your party.]

Everyone put away their weapons and when they were going to start harvesting the magic stones and materials, I'm the only one who tightly held my saber and looked deeper into the passage.

"……It's coming. It's the second battle right away but, it's a bit bigger."

A bug monster. Furthermore, seeing it running on the wall with its many legs feels really ghastly. It also has several eyes with drool trickling from its mouth.

It's a spider with a size that is two, no, three meters in length.

It's approaching this way with great momentum, so I rushed forward. The Second's voice talked to me.

[Lyle, it's a nice timing. Try using it.]

Hearing that I muttered the Art's name. Field.

It feels like my field of vision expanded with me at the center……the spider's movement is as clear as the back of my own hand. The spider is going to spit out something from its mouth. I moved to a position where it won't hit──I dodged in a hair's breadth and without pause my saber cut apart the leg's joint.

"So three legs are impossible."

I cut through two of its legs while passing it by. The spider slid from the wall and collapsed. It then turned towards me. It seems that I made it angry.

Rondo-san and the others came running from behind the spider, and yet the spider seems to have fixed its target on me. Its mouth opened horizontally and made a threatening gesture while heading towards me. But, its movement is awkward because it lost its legs.

I jumped and stabbed with my saber. The saber pierced through the spider and stabbed into the ground.

The spider cannot stop its momentum and it spread its wound wider, ruining itself. It then collapsed and its body fluid scattered. And then it stopped moving.

The Third clapped his hands inside the Jewel.

[Lyle is really strong. I cannot imagine it because normally you’re too hopeless though.]

I wish he will praise me more honestly. Is it wrong for me to want that?

"Disgusting!"

Rachel-san looked at the spider and acted fearfully. Ralph-san laughed.

"What, it’s just a big spider."

"I’m no good with spiders! Rondo, please, that thing’s harvesting──"

Sophia-san stepped forward.

"I’ll do it. Even so, what part can be sold?"

Zelphy-san shrugged and started teaching Sophia-san the way to harvest the material. I watched the surroundings alertly while taking back my saber and wiped the liquid stuck on it.

At the same time, I focused on checking the route in order to collect the next treasure box, the monsters' movements, and then the movements of the adventurers moving inside the dungeon.

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Evening.

On our way back we also rushed through the dungeon using a course without any monsters in it, so we were knackered when coming out from the dungeon.

But, everyone's face is bright. We're sweaty and knackered because the weight of the luggage on our backs is different from before. Even though the price of monster materials and magic stones will be beaten down, the contents of the treasure boxes……is a jackpot just as the Second said.

"Lyle, we did it!"

Ralph-san clapped my shoulder. He is in a really good mood. All his frustration until now has cleared up.

"Yes, let's get back right away. Oops, we've to bring the magic stones and materials to the guild."

I said that and headed towards the guild's tent.

The magic stones and materials are bought cheaply, but everyone is feeling good and they are smiling even then. Like that we returned to our tent. There Novem and Aria-san are waiting.

The earnings this time are lined up on the table.

"Wait, this……just how hardworking were you guys!?"

It can’t be helped that Aria-san is surprised. After all most of the items could be called as treasures without doubt. Ring, necklace, there is even a lump of silver among them.

If there is an exception, it must be this gauntlet with its exquisite appearance. It’s quite large and a complete set for both hands.

Novem is happy seeing that.

"You did it Lyle-sama. If we can sell this in Dalien, it’s certain that it will fetch more than 50 gold coins."

This is all that we got in a day. Can we recover the money we used up with this or not……it’s an unclear line. Even so this is still better because now we have hope.

And then, Rondo-san made a request to us.

"I’m sorry. Actually about this gauntlet……can we receive it in advance as our reward?"

I looked at Rondo-san. I think the large gauntlet will be too loose even for Rondo-san.

Rachel-san also joined her hands together and begged.

"I’m asking too! You have seen how this idiot is since some time ago, besides this guy doesn’t have any proper armor."

Ralph-san started making a noise.

"Tha, that’s not it! I, it’s not like I want that thing or anything!"

I tried holding up the gauntlet. The Second fell into a bit of thought.

[It’s not even a magic tool, but its manufacturing is nicely done. If you sell it, it feels like it will be quite much. It also has decorations, there would be a lot of people who like it.]

I looked at Novem and the other members first. Then after they gave permission, I looked at Ralph-san and the others.

"It’s not a magic tool or armor that has mana but, if you are fine with that then…"

Then Rondo-san smiled. He turned towards Ralph-san.

"Ralph, that’s great. You said from before that you want an armor."

Ralph-san scratched his hair shyly.

"My, my bad. The way I use money is wasteful, and my spear also broke often so things like armor is outside my grasp. Thanks a lot, Lyle."

Seeing Ralph-san wearing the gauntlet joyfully made me happy too. He is delighted like a child.

Novem stood beside me and smiled seeing the three.

"They’re a party with a good relationship. Besides I think they have good prospects for the future."

They’re specialized in offense based on what I saw form the battle inside the dungeon, but if their members increased then the way they fought will be more balanced.

"You’re right. We, too, also can’t lose."

I said that and laughed slightly. Inside the tent, the gloomy atmosphere until now is blown away and the number of laughs increased.

Amidst that, I can hear the voice of small children calling from outside.

The Second said.

[Oh, they came. Lyle, we still have the sweets assortment right? Prepare it.]

I did as I’m told and went outside. There three small children are waiting.

"Err, what is it?"

A child with emotive eyes took a step forward as the three's representative.

"E, excuse me! This evening, the adventurers were speaking. They said that the people here are getting carried away, so they're going to give a greeting……"

When I tilted my head, the Fifth summarized it for me.

[They meant that Lyle is standing out and an eyesore, so they'll come to pick a fight. I never thought that anyone will really come picking a fight. I thought they will do it in a more roundabout way.]

The Sixth is disappointed.

[Their level is low. ……Disappointing.]

I returned inside the tent and brought out a box filled with sweets. I handed it to the three. I also handed several bronze coins to the three's leader.

"Thanks for the info. But, remember to not do anything rash, okay?"

The three received the sweets and left happily.

I pressed my hand on my forehead.

"……What to do? Will they come within today?"

I said those words toward the ancestors, but it's Zelphy-san who replied.

"They will aim at time when there is few people. Even so, it's unknown whether they're just talking or they're serious. It'll be great if this is just those brats lying. ……Tomorrow it's decided that Rachel will rest."

A magician is important. Because of that, we made Novem and Rachel-san rest alternately.

"The rough looking Ralph will remain, in that case I also want Rondo to do the same. Well, the three of you will rest tomorrow. I'll also rest, so tomorrow it will be the four of you who go into the dungeon."

Making half of us rest? I felt doubtful but, perhaps it's better for various things if Zelphy-san remained behind.

I absolutely have to participate in order for the party to use Arts. Because if I don't then we won't be able to earn profit effectively.

Zelphy-san wore her armor and went outside armed.

"Where are you going?"

Zelphy-san answered shortly to my question.

"The bar."

She said that and vanished into the campsite that has turned dim.

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──Zelphy came to the bar that Byron managed.

"Shit, that damn womanizer rookie!"

"He went crying to that bastard Hawkins!"

"Scattering around money to lick everyone's boot. Annoying."

The adventurers were gathered there in irritation towards Lyle's group. Yesterday morning, Hawkins gathered the adventurers who entered the dungeon and warned them to protect the rules. It seemed to be effective. The rumor that Hawkins's warning was because of Lyle's request spread. The dissatisfaction naturally got directed to Lyle. But, in contrast to them, Lyle's popularity in the campsite was high. That dissatisfied them further.

Zelphy arrived at that timing. Everyone made a shocked face while looking down. Everyone was an adventurer in Dalien, all of them were familiar with Zelphy's face.

"What’s the matter big sis?"

Zelphy intentionally sat down violently and started talking after ordering alcohol.

"I came to drink and give a reminder while I’m at it."

When the alcohol was brought to her, Zelphy wildly gulped it down in one breath and looked over everyone.

"Some idiots said that the rookies I’m looking after are getting cocky. In other words, are they calling me cocky by that?"

Everyone fell silent. Lyle’s instructor was the veteran Zelphy. Zelphy was more skilled and her career as an adventurer also longer than them. They seemed to recall that fact.

"……No, no one intended to say such thing. We’re just-"

"Just? What’re you going to say after that?"

When Zelphy showed a dangerous air, Dalel came with a refreshed look after getting out of bath.

He was only wearing short pants and a towel on his shoulder because of the hot weather. No matter what he only looked like a middle aged old man, even so he was an adventurer with an even longer career than Zelphy.

"Haha~, even taking a bath using a bucket feels good. The only problem is getting my naked body seen over and over I guess? ……By the guys."

Dalel cackled loudly. Zelphy covered her face with her right hand to that.

"Dalel, can you shut up?"

Dalel sat beside Zelphy.

"Ain’t this fine. You’ve stayed quiet until now. It’s boorish to come here in panic to give a warning just because some guys picked a fight. Ah, miss, give me alcohol too."

Dalel ordered alcohol, then he spoke admonishingly to the surrounding guys.

"You guys also get it with this right? It’s no good to threaten the surrounding bunch and make it harder to do the job yeah. Be more considerate to the surroundings. Besides, if you guys picked a fight with that “Womanizer” now, the whole camp will turn into your enemy."

Dalel laughed, but the face of the adventurers turned bad hearing that the whole camp would turn into their enemy.

"……By the way, actually I’m also instructing some rookies. Those guys got quite good prospects going for them, but they’re strangely considerate to the surroundings. I can’t bear seeing them overdoing it with giving tributes to the guys around them. Pay attention to that a bit okay?"

The adventurers who received alcohol and food from Rex’s party turned their gaze from Dalel with a pale face.

"Then, let’s drink! ……By the way Zelphy missy, it’s good and all wearing your equipment to threaten but, I think it’s better to go to bath you know? ……You reek."

"Shut up, this middle-aged old man!"

Zelphy came with the intention to warn everyone but, she ended up getting handled by Dalel like a rookie──

Chapter 38 – Steady Advance

The ninth day.

Novem, Aria-san, Sophia-san and I, the four of us are challenging the dungeon. Our progress can be said to be favorable.

Inside a notably large room inside the dungeon, there are a lot of monsters placed there. But we launched a surprise attack and carried out the battle in our advantage.

"Got you!"

Aria-san accelerated using her Art and circled behind the enemy. She then pierced the orc's chest using her spear. The explosive acceleration using Art coupled with the strike that was launched from it made the orc scream and die with one attack.

Sophia-san also threw several hand axes that she brought with her.

"Over there!"

She lightened the weight using her Art when throwing, then the axe was freed from the Art's effect and returned to its original weight. The throwing using the weight manipulation Art caused the hand axe to dig deeply into the head of a goblin.

The Third spoke a few words.

[……They have become tough.]

He sounded somewhat disappointed.

Novem lifted her silver staff that was a heirloom and used magic.

"Wind Cannon!"

The insect monsters flying in the sky are swallowed by wind. Their wings and body are torn apart and blown away, causing them to fall to the ground.

The remaining monster is only a praying mantis with a size of about two meters.

"What is this thing’s name again?"

I readied two sabers on both hands and stood in front of the praying mantis.

"It’s Green Mantis."

Novem answered me, but my focus is turned towards the monster before me. It’s trying to catch me with its two sickles. I deflected them with my sabers. Its head that has an inverted triangle shape looks really eerie.

When it moved its sickle in a big way, I rolled forward and slid under the mantis’s legs, cutting its leg with my saber. I stood up and cut its stomach part──the soft part.

The monster raised a voice that sounded like a scream. When it tried to turn around towards me, Sophia-san took out her battle axe from her back and slashed horizontally……The monster’s upper body is blown away.

I observed the surroundings cautiously, but the other monsters are already dying. There is also no other presence of monsters nearby. I stabbed my sabers into the ground and looked down on the mantis.

"Damn it. I didn’t ask Zelphy-san which part of this monster can be sold."

Then the Second taught me.

[In my era the sickle part could be sold. Also, the magic stone is in its stomach part.]

After being told that, I pretended to think before telling the other three.

"After searching the magic stone, let’s bring back only the sickle parts. We’ll confirm it with Zelphy-san later."

Aria-san nodded.

"There is no other choice than that. Or rather, getting deeper, the monsters that we've never seen before appear a lot more."

It's a troublesome thing. After asking them to collect the magic stone and material, I walked towards the wall searching for a treasure box.

I understood its location from the start, so I discovered it without problem. I talked with a small voice so Novem and the others won't hear.

"There're three treasure boxes in this room. It's really extravagant."

When I took out the contents without harming it, there is a wallet inside. The content is filled with gold coins and silver coins.

"Yep, we're lucky."

The Fourth is also happy.

[This kind of cash income is nice because it doesn't take time to convert it into money.]

The Sixth sounded disappointed.

[There is no dream with cash. As expected when speaking about dungeons, it has to be treasure. The fun is in wondering how expensive it could be sold for.]

I don't understand the Sixth's feelings. If I have to pick, then my thinking is nearer to the Fourth's. When I thought that,

[That's fun in its own way but, like……when counting the money one by one, it makes you want to keep them importantly inside a vault.]

Sorry, I can't understand the feeling of both sides. As I thought, the Fourth is also the Fourth.

The second treasure box is filled with a gold bullion. It made the Fourth delighted. It’s not a rare metal that emitted magic power, but gold is still exceptional.

And then, when I pried open the third treasure box, there was a gem inside emitting an indescribable radiance of yellow-green color. It’s the size of a palm, and more importantly it’s giving off a mysterious feeling. It seems different from any gem I saw until now……no, I think I’ve seen it somewhere?

While I’m wondering, the Seventh told me what the gem is in excitement.

[As I thought Lyle has something with him. A “magic ore” this big is rarely discovered you know?]

"Magic ore? ……If I remember right, it’s used for magic tools."

The gem that is embedded into magic tools. That’s right, this gem is the same as that. When I looked at the magic ore in my hand, it felt like I would get sucked into it.

A beautiful gem with yellow-green color.

[That’s a peridot. You got something rare there.]

After the Fifth said that, I decided to put it in a different bag and brought it back carefully for now. The Seventh also told me that this one gem has a great value.

I turned around to notify the other three right away.

When I looked at the three, for some reason they are looking at the surroundings with a surprised face.

"Eh?"

Following their gaze I looked around. The sight also made me shocked. From the gaps of the wall that is made from trees, duranta flowers were growing profusely all over the place.

That’s right, flower language…….

I asked Sophia-san about the meaning of duranta in the language of flowers. Sophia-san who is entranced by the surrounding sight returned to her senses from my voice.

"Sophia-san, about duranta’s in the language of flowers──"

"Eh!? Ah, yes! In the language of flowers……it’s, it means welcome."

Sophia-san is red faced and she cast her gaze down. I see, that was why she accepted that flower so happily like that.

I looked at the surrounding sight.

"It’s pretty. Bluish purple flowers with warm light from the ceiling……it’s a wonderful sight."

Sophia-san said that and looked around ecstatically.

We took a break here for a while, and then we started moving to the next spot while thinking that even mysterious events like this would happen sometimes.

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──Lyle’s party safely passed the ninth day and returned to the campsite.

What happened inside the dungeon weighed on Novem’s mind.

The duranta flowers that bloomed profusely all at once.

While she was thinking, Lyle raised a yelling voice.

"Damn it! I forgot to say it!"

He hurriedly took out a small bag from his luggage. For Novem that sight was really something that made her smile.

(Lyle-sama, really, how helpless……)

Novem smiled and approached Lyle, but her eyes opened wide seeing the gem that rolled on the table from the leather bag.

(……Why?)

Everyone other than Novem inside the tent was also shocked. Because of that, no one felt it was curious that Novem was shocked.

"What’s with this gem!"

Ralph talked loudly in shock. Zelphy swung down her fist on his head.

"Idiot, don’t make a ruckus! What’re you going to do if someone heard you? Even so, this thing……a magic ore huh. Lyle, you pulled a jackpot here. Just one of these things already definitely sends you into the black this time."

Novem looked at the joyful Lyle while sending her gaze to the gem too.

"Err, there was a room that suddenly had flowers blooming profusely inside. I found this there. As I thought, it’s really a jackpot isn’t it."

Aria yelled.

"You found it there!? Then tell us faster!"

Lyle was bewildered from Aria pressing him with her words.

"I got distracted at that time. I mean, sorry!"

Novem looked down.

(That room……this peridot……besides the meaning of durantas. It’s not a coincidence.)

Then Sophia opened her mouth.

"Come to think of it, a duranta flower blooming also happened on the first day we entered the dungeon isn’t it?"

Novem looked at Sophia.

(The day I wasn’t with them? What does it mean……)

Aria stared at Sophia with a bit of envy. Lyle also recalled the happening of that day while explaining.

In summary, the flower bloomed without anyone noticing. For Novem there was meaning in that.

After that everyone’s laughing voice didn’t stop. Suddenly, Sophia was moving to go outside the tent. She might have some business outside. Novem followed behind her and called out to her when there was some distance between them and everyone.

"Sophia-san."

"Yes? Ah, Novem-san, what’s the matter?"

Sophia looked a bit happy. Thinking back, Novem recalled that Sophia looked like she had a bit of composure emotionally since the second day.

(I see, so that’s how it is.)

Novem asked Sophia about the day when a duranta flower bloomed in the dungeon. Then, Sophia answered Novem with a slightly red face.

When she finished talking, Sophia took out from her pocket the duranta flower that was put between paper.

"I’m keeping them, thinking that perhaps I’ll turn them into a pressed flower later. I know that wasn’t what Lyle-dono meant when giving me this, even so it’s still a flower that means welcome in the language of flowers. So I’m happy."

She wasn’t clearly told that she was welcomed, even so Sophia said that she was happy. Then, Novem took that pressed flower and put it between her hands. She then used her magic.

"No, Novem-san!"

Surely Sophia was thinking that Novem would burn the flower seeing that. She tried to stop her in panic. After all, smoke was coming out from the paper between Novem’s hands.

But, when Novem opened her hands, there were the duranta flowers that had become a pressed flower beautifully there.

"A special service. Also, at the very least I've welcomed Sophia-san from the start, and Lyle-sama should feel the same too. Aria-san too is surely welcoming Sophia-san. Please have confidence in yourself."

Sophia received the flowers that had become a pressed flower and her eyes turned slightly tearful.

"Tha, thank you very much."

And then, Novem smiled at Sophia.

"Also, duranta has one more meaning in the language of flowers. It is "Watching over you"."

After Novem said that and left from that place, Sophia was unable to move from there with a bright red face.

(Yes, duranta's meaing is "watching over you". And then, peridot is──)

When Novem arrived at a distance where Sophia would be unable to see her face, she expressionlessly put the two events together and muttered.

"……Octo, you-"

She didn't finish her words till the end──

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──Inside Sword Wings' tent.

Rex was in a bad temper.

"Shit-!"

They were certainly earning money. Their exploration of the dungeon also progressed and the amount they earned also grew bigger. But, a bigger problem than that was──

"Those guys, just what are they doing to earn that much!"

Lyle's party obviously couldn't earn any money in the early stage. It wasn't like they let their guard down, but when they returned on the sixth day, a banquet was suddenly held. When they asked, it was Lyle and his group who held the banquet to thank everyone including the rear support.

At first that act was made fun of, but it could be seen that day by day Lyle and his group was turning the table on them. Even when having meals, the food would be distributed to Lyle's group first.

On the guild's side, Santoa hating Lyle and putting off processing his procedure for the last became a problem. To make up for that, Lyle's group was given special treatment where their processing was prioritized.

Even if someone tried something, the surroundings was all allied with Lyle's group. They wouldn't know where they would be seen or their conversations eavesdropped.

"At this rate we'll lose against those guys."

Rex looked at Dalel, but Dalel himself didn't look particularly fixated about winning or losing.

"Dalel-san, what should we do now?"

Even that feeling of dependence of Rex was within Dalel's expectations.

"Think of it by yourself till the end. The coaching period is also over already. You guys will have to feed yourself on your own from now on."

Rex looked down and clenched his fist.

(Losing against that guy……who’s gonna accept that. Just how hard we have worked until now huh)

The comrades around Rex called out to him in order to calm him down. But, their voice didn’t reach Rex──

.

Night on the tenth day.

The dungeon subjugation progressed favorably, and it won’t be long before the deepest room was found.

The earning is favorable. Obtaining the magic ore also played a big part in that. However, looking at the income and expenditure, it’s hard to say that we made a lot of profit.

Thinking of the worn down equipment, and then the reward for Rondo-san’s group, how much money will remain for us…….

Night came. I worked on the account book alone and confirmed all the expenses.

I tried writing this after the Fourth told me, but looking at it like this with only large minuses written on it, it made me feel fed up.

"That old man Byron, he said that cooking tools are needed, but he didn’t need to go as far as preparing a grill for toasting bread."

That we’re able to eat freshly baked bread is also thanks to that grill.

The Fourth laughed.

[It’s great to have burning business spirit like that. Well, we haven’t sold all the treasures so I cannot say anything for sure but, I believe we are in the black. No, we’re going to be in the black at any cost!]

The Fifth warned the Fourth who was like that.

[It’s Lyle who will sell it though. Lyle, work hard.]

"……Won’t it be alright if we collect more treasure boxes?"

The Second refused my thinking.

[Don’t. If you go further than this, you will be the only one earning money and will stand out again in a bad sense. If that happens, the days you can sleep peacefully will be gone.]

It’s no good even if we earned too much, I think the adjustment for that is unexpectedly difficult. It’s also possible to earn more but, the ancestors told me I mustn’t do that.

"So it’s like that."

[It’s like that. We’re the one saying it. So there is no mistake.]

My gaze turned towards a saber that has become unusable and was left behind inside the tent. I already used up two sabers until they became unusable, only four remaining that I brought here as spare.

"On another topic, as I thought……it’s no good unless I also do something about my weapon huh."

The Second advised me. It’s a bit unusual that he doesn’t recommend his own weapon.

[It might be good to buy one with good quality. Well, your stay in Dalien will be over soon too. After that, one option is to buy it at Centralle.]

Our stay in Dalien will be over soon. Hearing that made me sad for some reason.

Hawkins-san and Zelphy-san, Rondo-san and the others who we met in Dalien, we would bid farewell to them.

[Lyle, you’re feeling lonely? At that kind of time, you should have hope towards the encounters you will find in the future. Just like your meeting with that elf girl Eva, there’ll also be a lot of encounters for you.]

"That’s……you’re right."

My feeling became slightly comforted from the Third’s words.

[Besides it’s not even a final farewell for your whole life. And it looks like Aria-chan and Sophia-chan will come with you so it won’t get lonely. Yep, it won’t be lonely.]

The Third’s way of saying that felt concerning somehow, but before I could ask back, Novem entered into the tent.

"Lyle-sama, it’s Hawkins-san. It seems he will return to Dalien for some time. But, if we talk to the other guild staff, I think they’ll still take care of our processing like until now."

"Hawkins-san will be going? Why? His position is like the person in charge from the guild right?"

Novem looked hesitant to say, but she began with "This is just my assumption but" before continuing,

"It seems they don’t have enough personnel, so they don’t have any staff that can be entrusted with transporting the magic stones and materials. After all that Santoa-san doesn’t look like she can be entrusted with responsibility."

It seemed that the magic stone and materials are transported to Dalien regularly. However, there is a possibility that the convoy will get attacked midway or the people transporting the items will steal from it. It must be important for the guild to assign a supervisor for the undertaking.

The Sixth said.

[That guy Hawkins also has it hard huh. Or rather, that Santoa really is just a burden.]

His words are really harsh.

I’m alone with Novem inside the tent. Novem looked at me looking like she wanted to say something. The Fourth purposefully cleared his throat.

"Do you have something to talk with me?"

"No, it’s not a big matter but……Lyle-sama, have you ever felt like someone was watching you when entering the dungeon?"

I tilted my head. I was alert to my surroundings using Arts, so there shouldn’t be anything like that. No, but……now that she mentioned it, it also felt like I was getting watched but…….

Well, it must just be my imagination.

"No, I don’t think I felt anything like that?"

Novem smiled hearing my answer.

"I see. In that case it’s nothing. Then, excuse me."

Novem went out of the tent looking a bit relieved.

.

──The evening of the twelfth day.

Santoa was procrastinating because the annoying Hawkins was gone.

"Which party is going to treat me today I wonder?"

A timid guild staff was looking at Santoa with criticizing gaze. But, Santoa didn’t even pay any attention to that. She stuffed the paperwork on the table into a file disorderly.

"Santoa-san, please check them properly."

Santoa clicked her tongue inside her heart towards the timid staff.

(Chih, what’s with you, a mere low ranking staff is talking to me.)

"Yes~, I’m checking them~"

After she said that and spread the paperwork, the timid staff exited the tent because he still had other work remaining that he was going to do.

The amount of work for Santoa was the fewest. She was foisting her work to the other staffs.

"How annoying. Really……"

After Santoa said that in irritation, an adventurer entered. The cheerful adventurer found her and invited her to dinner.

"Santoa-chan, we're going to have a party after this. You want to come with us?"

Santoa looked at the adventurer.

(Well, few adventurers here are decent, so let's endure it with these guys.)

"Yes~, I'm going there now~"

Santoa left the tent together with the adventurer while acting cutely. Among the paperwork that was spread on the table, there was one paper with the plan of the Sword Wings for today written on it.

Even though the time of their return that was written there had passed, they still hadn't returned to the campsite──

.

──Dalel rushed into the guild's tent in panic.

"Anyone here!? Hawkins! Hah, he went to Dalien. Someone!"

When he looked around inside the tent that was dark because it was evening, there was paperwork scattered on a desk. Dalel saw that and learned that Rex and the others still hadn't returned.

"What are those guys doing……doing this when I'm not with them……that's right, their guild cards!"

A guild card held several characteristics. One of them was that it consisted of a pair, one was carried by the adventurer, while the other was kept by the guild. The reason was because when the adventurer

died, the name that was engraved on the guild card would get scratched out with a line, informing of their death.

Dalel hurriedly checked the board where the guild cards were placed. None of the guild cards of Rex and the others had a line through their names.

"Great. They're safe. But, at this rate……are they unable to move, or are they getting impatient and are keep going on……"

Dalel resented how Hawkins wasn't here at this kind of time. And then he left the tent and went to pick up Rex and the others. He decided to ask for help from others. Zelphy's face was the first one that came to mind.

He hurriedly wore his equipment, called out to the adventurers he was acquainted with, and then headed to the tent of Lyle's group.

However, there was only Rachel and Ralph there.

"Oi, Zelphy hasn't returned yet!?"

Seeing Dalel wearing equipment and looking anxious, Rachel explained that Zelphy and the others wouldn't return today.

"She, she said that today she would teach the way to stay the night inside a dungeon and won't come back. It's because the discovery of the deepest room won't be long now, she said. I think they'll return tomorrow morning."

Dalel nodded.

"Got it. When they get back, tell her that a middle-aged old man Dalel was looking for her. She will understand if you just tell her that!"

Dalel left with a run before Rachel could reply.

He hurriedly headed towards the dungeon's entrance. His acquaintance adventurers were already waiting there for him. Dalel gave instruction to them.

Dalel explained in front of his acquaintances of his request to search for Rex and the others.

"Zelphy is inside the dungeon. Also, I think those guys are searching this area. My bad but help me with the search."

One adventurer nodded but,

"Got it. We should help each other at this kind of time. But you know, Dalel old man. It's night already and our number aren't enough. The range we can search is going to be limited."

Dalel looked at the map while…….

"I know that. But, I've got to find them somehow."

The adventurers looked uneasy.

"Don't force yourself too much okay? We've also called the other guys too just in case."

"My bad. It'll be great if it's actually nothing though."

(I blundered. I underestimated their anxiety……this is my responsibility)

Dalel felt responsible for Rex and the others. He decided in his heart to find them no matter what.

Like this, Dalel and the others stepped inside the dungeon with few number of people──

.

──Some time had passed since light vanished inside the dungeon. The darkness was illuminated by the light of a lantern that the supporter carried.

They had fought a lot of monsters, but more importantly than that, all of them were looking at the sight before them with their eyes opened wide.

Rex was excited seeing the gate that came into sight from the lantern’s lighting before his eyes. Trees were twisting to form the shape of a gate. If there was this kind of entrance inside the dungeon then…….

"Oi, is this the thing they called the deepest room?"

The voice of a comrade caused one person, and then one more person to get excited.

They advanced through the dark path and luckily discovered this. Originally they were rashly trying to earn income as much as possible because there weren’t many days remaining. That was all, but they arrived here and discovered the deepest room.

Rex and the others cheered.

"Discovering the deepest room means we’ll get equal split of the treasures inside if I remember right isn’t it!? We’ll get some big income with this!"

Rex yelled angrily hearing those words.

"Don’t say pathetic things like wanting to wait for the leftovers after we’ve come this far. Listen to me, everything inside here will be just for us……if we conquer the deepest room then everything will belong to us."

Everyone looked at each other, and then they said their opinion to Rex.

"That’s just too reckless no matter what. Let’s return for now."

"Yeah. We also have passed the return time already. If we’re careless, a search team might be formed to look for us."

"That’s the one that’ll get us penalized right? Hey, let’s go back already."

Rex recalled that and thought that perhaps they should return. However, Lyle’s face flashed inside his head.

"……Then, we're going to scout inside. It's fine if it's just that much right?"

His comrades agreed if it was just that. The members with light equipment peeked inside from the entrance.

(Because Dalel stayed behind, this time we came with all nine members. This kind of chance won't come again. If we don't challenge it here, then we won't be able to win against that guy.)

But, his two lightly equipped comrades tilted their head.

"What's wrong?"

Both of them borrowed the lantern, and then one person carefully entered inside to check the ceiling and wall. And then, he immediately returned.

The two of them looked at each other and tilted their head in confusion.

"I'm asking you two what's wrong!"

Rex was irritated. The two of them explained to him.

"It's empty."

"Ha?"

"That's why, the room is empty. There is no trace of monsters inside at all."

Rex put his hand on his mouth and then thought of the possibility.

(Invisible monsters? If I remember right, something like a chameleon has that kind of trait, I heard that before……no, but if it's just that then we'll be able to defeat it. Should we try?)

"Oi, can you check the inside using magic? It's also possible that it's a monster that won't show itself."

The magician stepped forward. He readied his staff from the entrance and launched his magic. He scattered water to the surroundings and looked around.

But, there was no reaction.

"……There is nothing."

Everyone looked at each other.

"No way."

"Is it because, it’s that kind of dungeon?"

"But, they said there will definitely be a strong monster inside the deepest room."

Each of them expressed their opinion, then Rex resolved himself and rushed into the room. He ignored his comrades that called him to stop and acted, but nothing happened at all even after he was standing ready with his weapon for a while.

There wasn’t any presence of monsters inside.

"……It’s empty."

Everyone was relieved and entered the room after Rex. A magnificent treasure box was prepared at the depths of the room. It really gave the impression that a great treasure was sleeping inside.

"Yo, you damn surprised us."

"Could it be, the monster is walking around? Like, perhaps it left this room?"

"Now that you say that, the large lizard we met on the way here was strong."

Everyone fearfully approached the treasure box. Everyone felt it anticlimactic and looked at the treasure box.

Rex held hope towards the treasure in the deepest room.

"It seems this dungeon is really profitable, so the treasure in the deepest room will surely be valuable too. Getting our hopes up at this is──"

When his hand reached out, Dalel's voice came from behind.

"Don't you touch that!"

The figures of other adventurers could be seen behind Dalel who rushed into the room. But, they were slower than Dalel.

Rex's reaching out hand touched the treasure box for an instant, then as though the dungeon had been waiting for that, trees immediately grew up from the entrance's ground to block the room's entrance. Dalel just barely made it to leap into the room, but the other adventurers didn't make it in time.

"……Eh?"

The treasure box crumbled, and then the ground shook. Dalel readied his spear and then gave instructions to everyone.

"Get ready! That thing is a trap. Shit-, I got a bad feeling."

After Dalel said that, he felt the presence of something rising from right below and moved from that spot. Right after that, what appeared from underground was a wriggling something with its large mouth opened……it was a monster with length that surpassed ten meters. It had no eyes or ears. It only had a mouth on its body.

It had a black body with white spots on it. And then there were sharp fangs lining up inside its mouth like forming rings. It wouldn't just bite, the fangs would rotate to grind its victims. The teeth that were lined up in many layers like that looked really eerie.

Dalel was sweating coldly.

"So it's a giant worm. Haa, because it's my last time I wore metal armor to put on airs, but I shouldn't have done that. This armor is meaningless against that thing, it's heavy and weighs me down…….

You guys, don’t stop moving! This thing is a troublesome monster that moves under the ground!"

Everyone readied their weapons. Dalel yelled to assure them.

"We’re locked but don’t worry. The outside has been informed. Calmly hold out here and wait until help comes. Perhaps we’ll even be able to defeat it and return to the camp in triumph!"

Dalel’s voice resounded inside the room──

Chapter 39 – Adventurer's Worth

The morning of the thirteenth day.

Me, Rondo-san, Novem, Aria-san, Sophia-san……and then Zelphy-san, the six of us were staying the night in the dungeon. Everyone besides Zelphy-san emerged from the dungeon's entrance with a tired face and looked up to the sky.

The unfamiliar environment was also terrible but, we were able to learn how difficult it is to stay a night inside a dungeon. Especially problematic is the shame and the emotional matter.

Zelphy-san rebuked us after seeing us like that.

"What's this, how sloppy. It's obvious that a human will let out what they ate. It's great that you guys finally know the reality."

Rondo-san is trying to think optimistically.

"Well, certainly. It's an important matter, and above all else is the problem of resting in enemy territory. But, can I teach this to Rachel and Ralph……"

In short, it's tiring. The unfamiliar environment also played a part but, the effort to secure safety inside a dungeon is just……haa.

While I'm fall into thought, the Fifth let out an exasperated voice.

[It might be embarrassing because you're young, but humans are all the same on the inside. Even the things that they spill out on a battlefield is──]

He must be trying to teach me something, but right now spare me from that.

"Let's sleep after returning to the tent. Let's sleep like the dead."

I said that and looked towards the campsite. There I saw Eva-san running towards us. Her face isn't smiling like usual.

She looked anxious about something.

.

In front of the guild’s tent, the adventurers are gathering.

They aren’t challenging the dungeon right from the morning. They’re wearing their equipment while talking noisily to each other about something. Several adventurers who’re look completely exhausted are talking with Hawkins-san. A lot of people are surrounding them uneasily.

A male staff member rushed out from inside the tent bringing several guild cards.

"Hawkins-san!"

Hawkins-san wordlessly took the cards and checked them, then he tightly gripped the cards.

The ragged looking adventurers are squeezing out weak voices.

"When we tried to hurry back to report, we were attacked by monsters and one of us was done in. We somehow made it back but, it took time……besides, old man Dalel was on the other side of the door……we couldn’t save him!"

A big man is crying. But, no one is criticizing him.

Zelphy-san opened her eyes wide and roughly pushed aside the adventurers to come to the front. Hawkins-san looked at Zelphy-san and ushered her inside the tent.

Then, Zelphy-san called my name.

"Lyle, you come too."

Then the Second said to me.

[Lyle, leave your luggage to Novem and the others and tell them to return to the tent. Make them prepare to depart and standby.]

Was it the Second’s instinct, or a decision from his experience? Anyway I followed his instructions. I entrusted my luggage to Novem.

"Novem, go back to the tent with everyone and standby there while preparing to depart again."

Novem received the luggage and nodded.

"I understand."

Rondo-san also returned to the tent with Novem and the rest. I then entered into the guild’s tent. There, the adventurers from Centralle are inside.

I cannot feel any motivation from them even in this situation. Have they been like this all the time?

Hawkins-san seemed to have just returned back here. He is checking paperwork and other things while still wearing his coat.

Santoa-san is trembling while looking around frequently. Zelphy-san is looking at such Santoa-san expressionlessly. No, I can sense that she is trying to hold down her emotion.

Hawkins-san finished reading the documents and concluded what had happened until now.

"A party that was scheduled to return yesterday evening didn’t return. And that matter wasn’t taken care of. And then Dalel-san brought several people with him to investigate but got caught into a trap at the deepest room."

Santoa-san hugged herself and made excuses. Her voice is yelling.

"I, it’s not my fault! It’s their fault for not coming back! Besides, it’s not my fault that they went off on their own…….it’s not my fault!"

The Third sighed.

[You can just ignore this girl. She can’t keep up with the situation, or rather she is only concerned with protecting herself. It’s a waste of time to talk to her.]

Hawkins-san threw the guild cards on the table violently. He stayed silent for a while before slowly opening his mouth.

"Forgive me, I got emotional. Well then Zelphy-san, let’s organize a rescue squad──"

There, the leader of the adventurers from Centralle opened his mouth.

"There is no need for rescue. For this type of trap, the door won’t open unless the boss in the deepest room is defeated, or the fools get annihilated. From how much time has passed, it seems they’re unable to defeat the boss. In that case, we can just wait until they’re annihilated. More importantly, I ask you to subjugate the dungeon quickly. Send a party to do it."

The Fifth seemed to notice something from seeing the attitude of the adventurers who came from Centralle.

[These guys, could it be that the purpose they were dispatched here from Centralle was as observers?]

According to the Fifth, surely no one wanted a dungeon to rampage near Centralle. He believed that they were dispatched to here was also for the role of supervising the subjugation.

That’s not a mistake.

"It will be intolerable if we stimulate the dungeon recklessly under the guise of rescue and cause it to rampage. The damage won’t just reach Dalien, but even until Centralle. Besides, it’s just around ten adventurers……there’s no problem even if they’re annihilated."

It doesn’t matter even if adventurers die, just don’t stimulate the dungeon, he said. Zelphy-san’s clenched fist is trembling seeing that attitude.

Hawkins-san also looked like he wanted to say something, but it seems he would follow the opinion of these people from Centralle.

"My apologies, in Dalien we're value the adventurers. Then, I'm thinking to leave the subjugation force to Zelphy-san. I think her strength is number one among the adventurers participating in this dungeon subjugation."

The adventurers from Centralle looked at us without much interest. They're unmotivated as usual, or perhaps they're looking down on us……I can't feel any vigor from them.

"That's fine."

They said that before leaving the tent.

Zelphy-san opened her mouth.

"Son of bitch-!!"

Surely those words were directed at them. From Zelphy-san's perspective, an adventurer she is close with, that she even made a bet with him, is in danger. It must be vexing that she is unable to go help him.

Hawkins-san is also looking frustrated.

"……Zelphy-san, I apologize. And then, please lead the subjugation squad and conquer the deepest room."

Hawkins-san too, he doesn't tell her to save them. Zelphy-san nodded wordlessly and then she left from the tent.

I also followed her outside.

.

On our way back to our tent, Zelphy-san talks bit by bit about her memories with Dalel-san.

"He is an unpleasant old man. He made fun of me who was still a rookie, and then when we made a bet he always ripped me

off……but, he trained me from a rookie until I could stand on my own. He was the one who taught the young and ignorant me the way to live as an adventurer."

Her voice is a bit shaky.

"We argued with each other each time we met……. Perhaps that's why, I couldn't say thanks to him until now."

For her, Dalel-san must be a person that is like Zelphy-san to us.

Zelphy-san said.

"I understand. The worth of an adventurer is the same like trash. We're only considered low lives to defeat monsters and gather magic stones. Even our difference with bandits or mercenaries is vague, from the view of common people we're just violent and unlikable people……but still, that old man Dalel is a good guy."

Adventurer──in Bahnseim, no, in the world in general they are evaluated lowly. It's just as Zelphy-san said, adventurers are hated.

Dalien is simply unique in its kind treatment, but from the view of other city's people, it doesn't matter to them whether an adventurer lives or dies. Rather, the reaction of the adventurers from Centralle might be the norm.

Zelphy-san turned towards me with a face that almost broke into tears. She forcefully smiled, but it's painful to look at instead.

"Hey, Lyle……do you have any novel idea, or suddenly got motivated like usual? ……My bad, I was joking. Forget it. Good grief, even though I'm an instructor, that was pathetic."

She asked me for help, and then said that it's just a joke. Even Zelphy-san herself understood that they can't be helped.

I tightly grasped the Jewel. I'm doing it almost unconsciously, but the words that came back from the ancestors are──

[It's not impossible.]

[You know, those adventurers from Centralle……I don’t like them.]

[I want to give them a scare, or rather I want to make it clear who is the better one here.]

[I hate those bunches from Centralle. That’s why I’m also in favor.]

[Wanting to do it when being told don’t is human nature.]

[I hate adventurers so, those guys’ order is aggravating. And so, I completely agree with the rescue!]

──What to do, normally I’m greatly troubled when the ancestors are getting motivated, but only today it makes me happy.

The Second talked to me right away.

[It’s getting fun. Lyle, it’s better to hurry if we’re rescuing them. Bring only the minimum and challenge the dungeon with all your strength.]

I called out to Zelphy-san who is walking ahead.

"Zelphy-san, let’s bring only the minimum. And also bring things like medicine or bandages more than usual."

Zelphy-san turned around and looked at me.

"Oi, no need to lie just to make me feel bet──"

I muttered inside my heart. "Be confident, so confident to even trick myself", and then I spoke boldly.

"Lie? How unexpected. I’m saying that we’ll save them. Those words aren’t a lie."

The Sixth laughed seeing my bold declaration.

[Great job Lyle! You’ve gotten really used to it huh!]

What to do, I cannot honestly feel happy at the Sixth’s words.

.

When we returned to the tent, Novem and the others are all waiting fully prepared to depart.

Zelphy-san gave instructions to everyone.

"Reduce your luggage to the minimum. Bring medicine and things that seems necessary for treatment, and also the minimum rations and water. Even if we encounter monsters midway, we won't fight as much as possible. We also won't collect any treasure boxes."

Then Rondo-san made a conflicted face.

"Zelphy-san, Eva-san heard the rumor just now and told it to us……wasn't it decided, not to rescue them?"

Eva-san averted her face from Zelphy-san's gaze.

Zelphy-san put her fingertip on her forehead.

"Elves are really……. Certainly that's true. But you know, Lyle here said that we can do it. Then, let's try gambling on it."

She slapped my back and pushed me in front of everyone. I messed my hair while receiving everyone's gazes, then I took a deep breath and straightened my posture.

The Fifth advised me.

[The problem is time. Explain the strategy while moving, and if possible I want you to fight with all your battle potential. After all we don't know what kind of opponent is waiting.]

The Sixth continued.

[About the deepest room, if the trapped guys are still alive then it's hard to imagine an extremely strong monster is inside. It must simply be quite troublesome. Besides, in my era, extremely strong monsters wouldn't come out from this kinda trap.]

The other ancestors also agreed with that so we'll surely be alright. In case there is an absurdly powerful monster──a boss there, then everyone should have been exterminated already.

"If there's a problem, then it's our fighting strength. We can't rely on the support of another party because they aren't used to traveling using my Arts. I want as much battle strength as possible, but if all of us go then this place will be completely empty. We can only ask someone else to watch this place for──"

Then Eva-san lifted her right hand.

"Yes, yes! I'll watch this place. You all have taken care of me until now, and I was also able to hear various interesting stories too!"

Eva-san looked really energetic. It would be better to rely on her rather than other people but, seeing her this energetic also made me feel like she was scheming something.

Novem looked at Eva-san while saying.

"And for the reward, you want us to tell you the details of the rescue later?"

Eva-san nodded hard.

"No good?"

Then Zelphy-san nodded hesitantly.

"I'll also try relying on boss Hawkins. I'll ask one more person to watch this place together with Eva-san while we're challenging the dungeon. He has to do that for us at least."

With this we're able to bring everyone into the dungeon.

The Second's voice came from inside the Jewel.

[Lyle, it will be a race against time. After all the dungeon will rampage if you make a mistake.]

I tightly grasped the Jewel and closed my eyes before slowly opening them.

"Then, we'll depart right away after preparing."

.

We reduced our luggage to the minimum.

Especially me, I'm only bringing weapons without any other luggage. This is also based on the ancestor's instructions.

The one who is carrying the most luggage is Sophia-san who has a weight manipulation Art. Even though she is carrying a terribly big luggage, it seems the only effect to her is that her movement is slightly limited by it.

Because of that, Rondo-san, Ralph-san and I, the vanguards also entrusted our luggage to her.

We can't help but feel bad for Sophia-san while running through the passage inside the dungeon.

Ralph-san is also glancing at Sophia-san repeatedly with an apologetic look.

I'm listening to the strategy's explanation from the ancestors in the middle of that.

[Now then, first is the basic premise. In order to save the trapped guys, the locked entrance──the door will have to be destroyed.]

The Seventh continued after the Second's words.

[If you destroy the door, it's possible the dungeon will rampage. This is the reason why Centralle's adventurers wouldn't let us carelessly save them.]

I'm running at the lead while judging and picking the route. The ancestors continued talking.

The Sixth spoke cheerfully.

[But, after you stimulate the dungeon, it will take some time until the rampage occurs. The dungeon won't rampage right after you forcefully destroy its insides. Though it's a fact that the dungeon will be stimulated.]

The Seventh touched upon the fundamentals of a dungeon.

[The treasure in the deepest room. If you can just take it, the dungeon will "wither". There is no exception to it. Then, you only need to destroy the door, defeat the boss of the deepest room, and complete the dungeon subjugation before it begins to rampage.]

And the method to destroy the door──will we use Novem's magic? This is a dungeon that appeared inside a forest. The walls are trees, and the ground is soil. I felt like if it's Novem she will be able to do it.

After running for a while, I discovered monsters on the route inside the map in my head. We can't take any further detours so we'll have to break through the place where the monsters are.

When I unsheathed my two sabers, everyone readied their weapons but──

"I'll do it myself. Everyone, please keep following behind like that."

When we're going through a straight path, there is an orc and two goblins there. The three are sitting in the middle of the passage. When they noticed us and stood up, I fired magic.

"Lightning Bullet"

The tip of my sabers pointed to a goblin each. Light crackled and then fired, attacking the goblins.

The scorched goblins opened their mouths and screamed while falling on the spot. I threw the saber in my right hand to the orc.

The saber stabbed into its neck. I approached and collected my saber by pulling it out in a way that widened the wound.

The orc collapsed while bleeding. Without pause I immediately started running.

The Third made fun of me.

[As expected after your growth, you seem to be fine even after using magic. Its power has also increased greatly.]

The Fourth seemed reluctant that we aren't collecting the magic stones and materials. While I'm thinking that, the Fourth seemed to guess my thinking and sounded upset.

[Lyle, do you think that I'm just a cheapskate? Good grief, I completely understand that sometimes time is more precious than anything.]

It seems I was being rude to him.

[Well, if we obtain the treasure in the deepest room, mere magic stones and materials aren't──]

I take it back. As I thought, the Fourth is the Fourth.

I sheathed my saber and kept rushing through the passage. Then the Second spoke to me.

[Lyle, rest for a bit. Even if you approach the deepest room, at this rate everyone will be completely tired and unable to fight.]

We might not make it in time. The Fifth seems to sense my feeling and said.

[Calm down. Even if you arrive at your destination, it won't be a joke if everyone won't be able to move there.]

Hearing that, I entered inside a suitable room to take some rest.

"We're resting for a bit."

After we entered a room without any monsters and stopped to rest, Rachel-san sat down while running out of breath.

Indeed, if we arrived at the destination like this and only took rest there, it would already be too late.

"So, sorry. My, stamina is……"

Rachel-san apologized. Ralph-san consoled her.

"It’s fine just rest. When you can’t go on anymore, I’ll carry you──"

"Should I carry you?"

The one who cut in like that is Sophia-san who is wiping her sweat. Aria-san asked her.

"You’re composed. Are you alright?"

Then Sophia-san nodded. She put down the heavy luggage there and rotated her shoulder.

"Even if it’s impossible to carry you on my back, I think it won’t be a problem if I carry you in my arms."

Although she is able to use a weight manipulation Art, making a girl do something like that is……no, but this is an emergency situation.

Rachel-san laughed while I’m thinking that.

"I’ll rely on you when I can’t go on anymore. But, our destination isn’t that far anymore right?"

Certainly that’s true. It would be fast if we can advance through the shortest route, but if we do that then the problem is the encounters with monsters will increase.

We’re using a detour route, so it will be a bit more distance until we arrived.

The Sixth said to me.

[It won’t be long, tell them that. Don’t be foolishly honest and tell them that there is still some distance. The people around you are also under pressure. Pay attention to that when speaking.]

I decided to nod.

"Yes. We’ll take a bit of a detour to avoid monsters, but there is only a bit of distance left."

Even while we’re doing this, the adventurers locked in the deepest room might be falling one by one.

There is also impatience from thinking that, but right now I decided to recover my stamina as much as possible.

.

──The deepest room.

Inside that place after a night passed, light was shining down from the gaps of the branches and leaves covering the ceiling.

The members of Sword Wings continued to move throughout the night, but when dawn came, three people were killed by the giant worm.

A magician was vomiting blood in pain within Rex’s arms.

"Oi, oi! Don’t die. If you die……if you die!"

Rex was crying. The mage laughed while talking.

"I, was living uselessly at home……I also couldn’t use magic satisfactorily and always got made fun of……that’s why, having you guys relying on me……made me happy."

He was a fifth son of a noble who became an adventurer. He was a son of a mistress, and couldn’t even use magic well. The man who was always made fun of said that he was saved by his meeting with Rex and the others.

Like that the mage stopped breathing. Rex was crying. His sword had snapped and his shield was also dented.

Two warriors who were carrying large shields became the first victims. They acted recklessly to protect their comrades and got eaten.

After that, a lightly equipped comrade became a victim when he tried to lure the giant worm.

And then, right now the mage had fallen──

"……Stupid idiot. Don’t give up till the end"

Dalel who continued to fight at the front lines to protect them was also caught by the giant worm’s mouth. He was going to be swallowed exactly at this moment. His metal armor was smashed by the sharp teeth. Scraping sounds could be heard. The spear in his hand fell and its tip stabbed into the ground.

"Dalel-san!"

Dalel smiled in pain and then he got swallowed by the giant worm.

The remaining members turned pale from despair.

Rex regretted his careless action and then he gritted his teeth.

(It’s my fault……my fault!)

He gently placed the mage on the ground and gripped the handle of his broken sword. The giant worm swallowed Dalel and moved its head to decide which one would be its next prey. There Rex threw his broken sword.

The giant worm looked at Rex. No, it had no eyes so it was wrong to call it looking. It opened its large mouth and moved towards Rex.

Rex moved his tired body and started running. He also threw his shield away. The giant worm swallowed that shield and closed its mouth. He picked up the spear Dalel dropped at that chance and attacked the giant worm.

"Don’t screw around, this worm bastard!"

The giant worm’s body was covered with an oil-like liquid, making it slippery. Several wounds remaining on its body were the proof of Dalel’s attack.

However, Rex who wasn’t used to handling a spear was unable to wound the monster. He slipped and lost his balance. The giant worm attacked Rex at that timing.

"Rex!"

His comrade raised his voice and pushed him away. Then that comrade was preyed on by the giant worm.

Rex’s face distorted seeing his comrade screaming and being devoured.

"Why the hell did you save me huhh!"

When the sixth victim came out, the giant worm’s body shook and it dived into the ground. It had also done this rarely before.

It moved around underground for a while to scare them as though tormenting them.

Rex and the others were falling into terror again in the situation where it was unknown where they would be attacked from below.

"That’s why I told you not to do it!"

One member went mad and headed towards the door. He tried to cut the trees covering the door with his weapon to get out somehow.

Right after the trees got attacked and injured, they would regenerate, completely preventing anyone to leave. They also tried to burn it. They also tried to use an axe to chop the trees down.

But, everything was no good.

Then, the giant worm appeared from the ground near the entrance and swallowed that member before diving into the ground right away.

That was the seventh person.

The remaining survivors were only the supporter and a lightly equipped adventurer. The two went to Rex, but Rex let go of the spear and it fell down.

He then fell on his knees and shed tears.

"Shit-! Shit-! GOD DAMN IITTTT……"

Various memories surfaced in his mind. If only he could go back. If only he didn't make the wrong decision.

……Then, the giant worm moving underground suddenly stopped moving.

"What?"

The lightly equipped man looked at the ground and muttered. Then the supporter took out a memo. He investigated the characteristic of worm type monsters from it.

"Worm type monsters will get slow when its stomach is full. Normally it won't move for a while after swallowing one person though."

Even enlarged it was still a worm. Then surely it was also full right now.

Rex laughed.

"What. So we're just food huh……hahah, what was that about becoming first class adventurers. In the end I'm this wretched."

Rex and the others sat down on the spot and stopped resisting──

.

We arrived at the entrance of what seemed to be the deepest room.

Everyone took their weapons and prepared to be able to fight anytime. Then Zelphy-san cut the trees blocking the entrance.

Seeing the trees immediately regenerating the cut, I guess that we won't be able to enter using your average attack.

I gripped the Jewel.

Blowing it away with Novem's magic, or burning it down.

I wanted to ask the opinion of the ancestors of which to do, then the Second──

[Yosh, Lyle! Use Oyaji's weapon.]

──Ha?

I rolled the Jewel, asking for an explanation impatiently. After all, that silver great sword won't obey me. Or rather, I can't control it.

Furthermore, I'll also faint after using it. I won't be able to join the fight like that.

While I'm thinking that, the Fifth opened his mouth.

[That great sword cannot be used in battle, but it's useful for this kind of time. Novem's magic will be needed for the battle, so by process of elimination……there is only you.]

I rolled the jewel with my fingertips in rejection. The Sixth is laughing.

[If you don't like it then keep hanging on your consciousness stubbornly. Well, even if you manage to keep being awake you won't be useful in that state though.]

Please wait. I completely thought that we're going to blow it away with Novem's magic. And yet, this strategy is outside my expectations.

The Second said.

[It's fine. Even without you, with this line-up they can defeat the boss. You brought all of them here for that.]

Eh? Could it be my role is only to open the door?

.

──Sophia was watching Lyle.

He seemed to be concentrating in front of the door while touching his heirloom pendant. He was deep in thought.

(He stopped moving right after we arrived. The door is closed means that the battle is still going on inside……is this to let us rest?)

When she looked towards everyone, as expected they all were slightly tired from running all this way.

Zelphy was looking at Lyle with a serious face, as for Novem she was simply waiting for Lyle's words with complete trust.

(There is no way that he actually doesn't have any plan after coming this far……is the door far more troublesome than expected?)

Sophia thought that, but Lyle didn't show any sign of bewilderment. He was simply looking at the door and thinking.

Before long, he stopped rolling the blue gem of his pendant with his fingers and turned around to look at everyone.

"I'll blow away this door. But, unfortunately it will use all my strength, so I don't know if I'll be able to join the fight. After I destroy the door, everyone please enter inside and fight."

Then Novem suddenly became flustered. The composure from before couldn't be seen.

"Lyle-sama, could it be you'll use that? You mustn't. You lost your consciousness when using it last time!"

A trump card that would make him faint. Everyone realized that Lyle had such thing.

(Is this door that troublesome he has to use that? But, in that case──)

Wouldn’t it be fine to blow it away with Novem’s magic? Sophia wanted to say that, but Novem offered herself first.

"Then, I’ll blow it away with magic. I can do it!"

But, Lyle immediately denied her. He also had a reason.

"No. It will be a boss fight inside. It’s possible we’ll need Novem’s magic there. Besides, in case the people inside are dying then I want you to heal them."

Lyle tightly grasped the Jewel and tore it off from his neck. However, the chain of the Jewel entwined around his arm and then it changed shape.

(Amazing. Also pretty……)

Sophia was watching in fascination at Lyle’s weapon and also Lyle himself.

A silver great sword──no, a zanbatou that was as large as a person appeared──

Chapter 40 –Versus Giant Worm

I took a deep breath.

I lifted my right hand slowly and imagined a great sword. The silver metal changed into something fluid. Its aggregate amount swelled and formed the shape of a great sword.

I felt the weight and tightly held its handle with both hands while taking a stance of shouldering the great sword.

If my hands let go, it felt like it would rampage right away. The great sword is like a raging horse that doesn't recognize me as its rider, even so I forcefully gripped it.

I tried subduing it with the First's Art, but it made a sound and my mana is taken away.

The Second's voice came to me.

[Lyle, just one attack is fine! Think about what you can do right now without doing anything reckless.]

Even if the third stage of the First's Art, Full Burst is impossible, if it's the first stage Full Over then I can use it. I had that hunch.

"……Full……Over……-!!"

I can feel my strength is increasing. When I lifted the great sword up high, the great sword starts to rampage as though it dislikes being wielded by me.

"This stubborn thing!"

I yelled and forcefully swung the great sword down to strike at the door.

"Be useful at least, ORAAAAA!!"

The blade that I forcefully swung down easily cut apart the trees blocking the door. Shockwaves blew away the surrounding trees. Pieces of wood flew everywhere.

When the tip of the blade hit the ground, dust flew up and even I got blown away. When I let go of the great sword, it immediately returned into the shape of a jewel──into a pendant that floated in the air.

Right after that, I felt a large vibration inside the dungeon. The shockwave echoed inside the dungeon like a shout.

It’s good and all that I blew the obstacle, but my body felt powerless. I can’t even hear the voices of the ancestors anymore.

While I’m feeling uneasy whether I’ll be able to fall safely, Aria-san caught me and also collected the Jewel.

"That was too much!"

It seemed she accelerated to catch me, so I didn’t need to fall and roll on the ground.

"Ahaha, thank you for the help."

When I looked at the door, it’s greatly gouged from upper right to the lower left. I can see inside. Zelphy-san and Rondo-san’s party already rushed inside.

However, the trees are already starting to regenerate to close the door again.

When Aria-san landed, she used her Art to accelerate while carrying me.

She passed through the gap of the door that is narrowing from the regeneration of the trees while carrying me on her shoulder. I coughed from the impact.

"Kahah! This is, harsh isn’t it?"

I said that while Aria-san lowers me slowly and places the Jewel around my neck. She then spoke nonchalantly.

"Is that so? I'm alright though."

I saw Novem immediately rushing towards me and then I looked around inside the room. There are three people with their gazes cast down at the center of the room.

I cannot find anyone else.

"Novem, take care of those three first──"

"Ye, yes!"

Novem immediately turned around in response and dashed towards the three who are our rescue targets. But, the three of them only look up with vacant expressions.

I can hear the Fifth's voice faintly.

[You are holding on to your consciousness. Good work. I want to tell you to take command right away but……]

The Sixth continued.

[It's better that you ask Sophia to carry you. It looks like the enemy is underground. It'll be bad if you can't move.]

In other words, you guys are telling me to ask Sophia-san to carry me in her arms?

It's no use even if I complain.

"Sophia-san, my bad but can you carry me? It seems the boss monster is underground."

It's pathetic but, I can't say any complaints right now. My body felt terribly languid. Sophia-san rushed to me and lifted me up.

She seemed to lighten my weight with her Art. Her left hand lifted me up and she put me on her left shoulder. I was in a really sloppy posture.

"I can't believe that you forced yourself until you're this exhausted. You're too reckless."

Sophia-san told me, but from my position this is just too pathetic.

"I'm sorry. If a bit more time passes, then I'll at least be able to move I think."

Like that, we looked at the three people at the center of the room.

Novem checked their injuries while talking to them.

"Are you three alright? Just what happened here?"

Novem is a bit flustered because she is worried about me, but she still tried to hear the story of the three. The three people looked down expressionlessly.

A male with brown hair is shedding tears.

"……They died. Because, because of me……we are simply surviving because, after the monster got full eating, it……"

I felt depressed hearing his words.

We can only save three of them. But, the Sixth said to me.

[Lyle, think of it as you "succeeded" in saving three of them. You've done the best you could in this situation. Be proud.]

There is nothing that I can be proud of while getting carried by a girl like this.

While I'm thinking that, there is a sign of something moving underground.

"Search……"

I used an Art and looked underground. Something is moving. The monster underground started to move because the dungeon was stimulated.

"This is bad, Map and Search──"

When I prepared to use the Fifth and the Sixth's Arts, the Fifth raised his voice.

[Idiot, that's not the Art that you should use! If the distance is this close, then rather than our Arts]

The Second slowly explained to me.

[Calm down Lyle. Use the Art I taught you. In the first place, it's times like these that my Art will shine. It doesn't matter even if it's underground, you'll be able to sense it perfectly so don't worry.]

I gasped. The Arts of the Fifth and the Sixth are too useful that I completely relied on them until now. When I used Field right away, I'm able to confirm the monster moving underground.

"Below! We'll be targeted if we don't move around!"

Everyone looked below and started moving from my shout. Then, a snake──no, something disgusting that looked slimy with a black body and white spots jumped out from where Ralph-san was standing.

Novem readied her staff and yelled while firing a fire ball.

"It's a giant worm! Please be careful, it's moving underground and targeting us from below!"

The torn apart ground is the proof that the giant worm had repeatedly gone in and out of the ground. The ground that originally should return back to normal immediately is recovering terribly slowly. The holes aren't all closed up, there are also a lot of parts that are soft. It's completely different from the entrance of the deepest room. It can be felt that the dungeon is favoring the giant worm.

Sophia-san also got her foot caught in the soft ground while running.

Zelphy-san is moving while explaining the method to deal with this by shouting.

"Hit at the place where it jumped out with everyone! Lyle, give instruction when you detect the enemy's location. Where will it come out next──"

But, the giant worm is already going to jump out.

"You three there, it's targeting you!"

Even when I shouted that the three we came to save are being targeted, they don't try to move. Or rather, it looked like their hearts are already dead and they're only waiting for death.

Zelphy-san dashed towards those three to save them.

"Aria-san!"

"Leave it to me!"

I called out to Aria-san. She seemed to have guessed what I wanted to say and accelerated with her Art to forcefully send the three flying from that spot.

Without pause she also collected Zelphy-san. There the giant worm jumped out from the ground with its large mouth opened.

Aria-san scowled.

"Uwaa, there are a lot of teeth inside its mouth."

Teeth are lined up in multiple layers in a ring shape. It's really ghastly.

Then, Rachel-san lifted her staff and fired her magic.

"I got you. Sand Arm!"

An arm that is made from sand stretched from the ground to catch the giant worm, but using the sliminess and the softness of its body, it slipped out easily.

Novem yelled.

"It’s hard to catch it, please burn it! Fire Cannon!"

A large fire ball is powerfully fired, hitting the flank of the giant worm. Flames spread out at that spot. But it immediately escaped underground.

It felt like we’ll be able to defeat it even at this rate, but the problem is──

"It feels like, the surroundings are becoming noisy since some time ago."

It’s just as Sophia-san said. The dungeon itself is starting to become active, as though it’s switching over to a rampaging state…….

"There is no time. If we waste time like this……let’s take the treasure first!"

Then the Third corrected my thinking.

[The master of the deepest room, nowadays it’s called a boss isn’t it? The treasure won’t come out without defeating it first. Even so this is troublesome.]

The Third said that it’s troublesome, so could it be that this boss is actually really strong?

[We……don’t really have experience fighting a giant worm.]

All the other ancestors also say similar things.

……What to do now?

.

──After Zelphy got saved by Aria, she immediately headed towards the three who were sent flying.

Seeing the three’s faces that had no spirit in it, she gritted her teeth and punched the three hard.

"Cut it out. We have gone through a lot of trouble because of you guys."

Rex cut his mouth from the punch and it was bleeding.

"……You should just leave us alone. Look, the dungeon might rampage because you all acted recklessly. You should just leave someone like us alone!"

That was what he said to the people who came to save them. But, Zelphy had no intention to abandon them.

"You guys are a really pathetic bunch huh. Old man Dalel’s praise for you guys was mistaken. Listen to me, adventurers are those who unsightly struggle to live! Move already!"

This time she kicked them flying, and then she readied her weapon.

Rex and the other two slowly stood up after hearing Dalel’s name and began to run away.

(That’s right, like that. What’s left is to do something about this monster──)

When Zelphy fell into thought, the giant worm leaped out from the ground.

She immediately swung her shield, firing several small fire balls then hit the giant worm.

It was Zelphy’s Art, Fire Shot. But its firepower was lacking and only singed the surface of the giant worm’s body before it quickly vanished.

"Damn it! So my Art is useless."

At that time, Aria rushed out from behind Zelphy and stabbed at the giant worm with her spear. Zelphy looked at Aria's figure and could only chase after her.

"This thing, it's disgustingly slimy!"

When she pulled out her spear, the mucus on the giant worm's skin and the body liquid got stuck on Aria's spear. She yelled out her honest opinion.

(Ojou-sama……)

Zelphy's family served the Lockwarde house in the past. Aria was a daughter of that Lockwarde house. For Zelphy she was like a cute little sister she played with when they were small.

That Aria had grown and used her spear to deeply stab a monster that Zelphy couldn't injure. It felt like she was shown that Aria already wasn't someone that she had to protect.

(I see, Ojou-sama already doesn't need me……)

Zelphy fixed her grip on her weapon and encouraged the three survivors.

"Keep moving if you don't want to die! We'll deal with the rest somehow!"

When she looked around, Rondo's party was also moving well.

And even more than that was Lyle. Right now he was exposing a pathetic sight with his body getting carried by Sophia, but he was accurately sensing the movement of the giant worm underground.

Above all else, Lyle was strong when he decided to do something.

Zelphy felt a bit lonely realizing that Lyle and the others had surpassed her──

.

No good, the ancestors are useless.

After going “Let’s do this” in high spirit like that, now they say that they had never fought a giant worm before.

Think. I have to think of a way to defeat it somehow!

During the time I’m thinking that while being carried by Sophia-san, Rondo-san and Ralph-san went around the giant worm that jumped out from the ground so that the monster is between the two of them. Then they nodded to each other and slashed simultaneously.

The sword Rondo-san is holding used an Art that caused it to make a low sound.

"Ralph, cut deep!"

"You got it!"

Ralph-san also swung his spear horizontally, cutting apart the giant worm. The slippery secretion on its skin and its body fluid scattered. The giant worm opened its large mouth and shouted.

It began to roll around on the ground, looking like it’s writhing in pain.

"Now, Rachel-san!"

"Leave it to me!"

Novem matched Rachel-san and launched fire from her staff to burn the giant worm. Then, the giant worm headed towards Sophia-san who is carrying me while it burned.

"Sophia-san, run a──"

"No, I can do it!"

Sophia-san lowered me to the ground and held her battle axe with both hands before largely rotating around. One rotation, two rotation, and then she threw the battle axe to the giant worm. It rotated while heading towards the monster, and tore into a part of its large mouth.

The battle axe kept moving and crashed on the wall, thrusting deep into it.

"……Amazing"

But, the giant worm is still moving. As expected from a boss, it’s tough.

While its movement is weak, the giant worm is moving into underground. If it managed to dive here, there would be no way to defeat it──there is also no time.

Rondo-san and Ralph-san wiped their weapons. Because they cut deeply into the giant worm, sticky liquid got stuck on their weapons, making them unusable.

"Shit-!"

"It’s sticky, I can’t thrust with it!"

Zelphy-san’s weapon is also becoming useless. Rachel-san is exhausted from firing magic consecutively, and Aria-san, perhaps when she charged at the giant worm with her spear, her hand was slippery and she let go of her spear.

It’s only Novem who is attacking the giant worm with flames, but there is no sign that the giant worm will be defeated.

Sophia-san also threw the hand axe she carried, but it only stabbed at the giant worm and it doesn’t look like it dealt great damage.

"Just a bit more……even though it’s just a bit more!"

The Art of the Second, Field is detecting that the giant worm is weakening. But, it will take time until it’s completely defeated.

It’s simple to defeat it. But it will take time. And yet, I’m sensing that it won’t be long until the dungeon begins to rampage from its reactions.

Then the Second said.

[……If you're going to finish this fight in one go, the best way against this kind of monster is by doing it from the inside.]

I gulped. Sophia-san who is nearby doesn't seem to notice, but I think it was careless of me.

The Third also started to think.

[You can throw fire when it opens its mouth, or attack with lightning……]

The Fourth is the same.

[Even so there is no guarantee that it will definitely get defeated with that. If you're going to do it, you'll have to at least bite and tear from inside its body.]

The Fifth seemed to be in agreement.

[In that case, you will need to leap into the stomach of the giant worm. But, simply getting eaten is no good. Those sharp teeth will get you. Jump at the moment it opened its large mouth and hammer it from inside.]

The Sixth sounded a bit excited.

[But, in that case the difficulty will be a bit high. It will be impossible for Novem but……]

As expected even Novem would find it difficult to leap into the giant worm's stomach and cast magic inside there.

Then, the Seventh said to me.

[But, it's possible if it's Lyle. The Second's Art will make it possible.]

I tightly grasped the Jewel. The Second spoke to me with a gentle voice.

[Believe it. You can do it with my Art. The problem is, in your state right now you will need help.]

I resolved myself and called Sophia-san and Aria-san. Rather than thinking whether it’s possible or not, right now I should carry it out as fast as possible instead.

A way to leap into the stomach of that giant worm. The best way is when its mouth is opened as large as possible.

"The timing when it jumps out from the ground. Or perhaps when it’s facing up!"

I immediately explained to Aria-san and Sophia-san, then the two doubted my sanity. Even I don’t know if it will go well but, at this rate the dungeon will rampage.

Aria-san yelled.

"You, you have a screw loose! Lyle will be in danger like that!"

Sophia-san is also of the same opinion.

"I’m objecting. Something like jumping in by your own initiative……besides, even the slightest mistake will turn it into mere suicide!"

I felt a bit moved at the two who are worried for me. Then the Second laughed.

[It’s great that they’re worried about you, Lyle. But, no need to worry……even your tactic will be possible using my Art.]

The Second’s Art, Field. Certainly it’s convenient. It’s more reliable than even the Arts of the Fifth and the Sixth at this kind of time. It’s suited for battle.

"There is no time. Please prepare quickly."

I forcefully made them agree with my words and we immediately began acting. Sophia-san lifted me up and lightened my weight along with her own. Aria-san carried the both of us up.

"Geez! I won’t care anymore what happens!"

The giant worm dived into the ground, and then it slowly moved. While the others are moving around, we are the only ones staying still on the spot.

Rondo-san yelled.

"You three, what are you──"

The giant worm is coming right below us who aren't moving. I ascertained the timing and yelled to Aria-san.

"Now!"

Aria-san crouched, and then she leaped to right above. Sophia-san and I can't keep up with the accelerated rapid movement.

A sense of floating. The scenery before our eyes instantly switched. For a moment I can't grasp where I am.

Right after that, the giant worm leaped out from the ground vertically with its mouth opened wide. The giant worm opening its ghastly mouth with the sinister sharp teeth lined up inside to the widest degree──is really clear to me through the Second's Art, Field. I yell to Sophia-san.

"Right below! Just throw me there!"

Sophia-san immediately took a stance to throw me.

"Please, absolutely stay safe!"

Rather than throwing me, it's more like she increased my weight drastically to put force behind my fall. Even though I felt light until now, now I felt like being pulled strongly towards the ground by the sudden weight.

When Sophia-san threw me towards the giant worm, I pulled my saber and held it with both hands.

I twisted my body midair in a minute adjustment, then entered into the giant worm's mouth like that.

I sensed Novem looking my way with a surprised face. The Second's Art is clearly conveying to me the situation around me.

"Lyle-sama!"

I hardened my resolve.

"I'll settle it in one go like thisss!"

The giant worm largely opened its mouth that was cut by the battle axe. Although the fangs inside cannot rotate, they're waiting to devour me. Its timing to eat me is off and I entered into its mouth.

The Second raised his voice.

[Lyle, it's not just the distance between you and your opponent. Grasping everything like this is a kind of the deepest level of mastery. Consider yourself as being in the domain of a master.]

The Art of the Second is said to be plain but, this Art along with its secondary effect are something that I'm grateful to have. After all, depending on how it is used, strength that is many times the original can be displayed when in groups.

"The spot where the blade can slip in easily……is there!"

Inside the giant worm's mouth. I thrust the saber's blade and descended to inside the stomach while cutting apart flesh.

Even though I entered inside at the timing when the mouth was opened at its widest, the flesh wall is sandwiching me and it's hard to move.

I felt a disgusting smell after entering inside its body. It's terribly smelly.

My left hand separated from the handle and I spread open my hand. I can feel the giant worm's body twisting. It might be raging outside. I gripped the saber tightly with my right hand and used magic while maintaining my posture.

"Its outside is tough but, what about the inside……I'll rip and tear your apart from inside! Ice Needle!"

A bit away from my left hand. From there an ice thorn is generated. It immediately became big and stabbed the worm from the inside. The ice thorn became like a pillar and pierced through the flesh wall until outside. It then started freezing the flesh from the stabbed part.

"Not yet. Still not yettt!!"

I forcefully squeezed out mana. The ice thorn got even bigger and cut apart the giant worm from the inside, ripping and tearing it.

The giant worm rampaged.

It felt like I'm going to get crushed by the flesh wall.

Even its sticky secretion is freezing, and then inside the cramped space even my breathing became white. It's then the raging giant worm stopped moving.

Right after that, a blade is stabbed from outside and light shone in.

"Lyle-kun!"

It's Rondo-san. He cut apart the giant worm, and then Ralph-san reached out his hand to me.

"Grab it!"

"Thank you."

I used up all my mana. I can't even hear the ancestors' voices anymore. I reached out my hand and let myself get pulled. I'm rescued from inside the giant worm's stomach.

Rondo-san scolded me.

"You were too reckless. I'm getting cold sweat just from watching."

Ralph-san is laughing. When I looked at the giant worm, it’s half frozen with its stomach split by the ice jutting out from inside.

"He’s right. But Lyle, you have more guts than you look huh. I’ll treat you to cake at Ciel next time so look forward to it."

While I’m smiling wryly listening to the two, Novem came running towards me. Thinking that she is worried, I smiled at Novem──

"Water!"

Novem splashed water to us three with a strong force. The water pressure made me unable to stand.

"Nove, Novem!? Wait a se──"

I’m flustered from receiving the sudden water attack, thinking that perhaps I’ve angered her. Then Zelphy-san also approached.

"Wash off the giant worm’s fluid for now. Novem, I’ll leave him to you."

After Zelphy-san said that, Novem nodded strongly.

"Lyle-sama, please endure it for a bit. I’ll wash off the fluid immediately."

This water attack is slightly harsh on my body that got slightly chilled from using magic just now.

"A, at least use hot water to wash……"

My voice got drowned out by the water’s flow.

.

──Rex was watching Lyle and his party win against the giant worm.

Seeing Lyle defeating an opponent that they couldn’t win against, furthermore in a time this short made him feel frustrated somewhere inside──no, he was feeling pathetic.

"……We were too different from the beginning. There was no way we could win."

It was clear even just looking at Lyle alone, but the strength of the other individuals was also extremely high. There was the excellent magician Novem, and in addition there was Aria and Sophia who manifested Arts.

In regards to Lyle, he was high leveled whether in sword skills or magic. There was no area in which they could win against him.

He was showing a pathetic appearance with his soaked look, but his strength was the real deal.

(I got led astray by rumors, thinking he's just a womanizer……I'm the stupid one.)

He felt pathetic and crouched on the spot, shedding tears.

(Because of someone like me, my important comrades died. Dalel-san also died……so why am I alive huh?)

Rex's two comrades couldn't talk to him with him leaking out tears like this.

Then Zelphy approached them.

"You guys, you understand what you've done right?"

Rex lifted his head and looked at Zelphy's face. Her face didn't look indignant or looking down on them.

She was simply talking indifferently. It was painful for Rex.

He thought that it would be better if she insulted him more.

"……Everything is my fault. That's why, if you're going to blame someone blame me."

"Don't misunderstand. What you have done broke the rules that the guild decided, that we got dispatched. Rather, it might be us who had done something outrageous."

They greatly stimulated the dungeon. A rampage might occur if they made the wrong decision. In the end no rampage occurred, but what Lyle and his group did was still terrible.

But, when it came to Rex and his group, they broke the rule which troubled the guild and other adventurers.

"Other than you guys, there is one more adventurer who accompanied Dalel here who died. Apologize for it later. Well, just prepare to get punched then."

Rex stood up.

"You're not blaming us? Even though Dalel-san died because of me──"

When he talked until there, Zelphy grabbed Rex's collar. She brought his face close to her where he could see the anger dwelling inside her eyes.

"I'll be lying if I say I'm not irritated. But even this is what old man Dalel chose. An adventurer gotta take responsibility for his own choices. That's natural. It's just obvious that he died because he made the wrong decision."

Rex shed tears.

A lot of lives were lost because of his mistaken decision.

"……Even though I want to apologize to Dalel-san, he isn't here anymore……I, we"

When Zelphy's hand let go, Rex fell on the spot. And then, he broke out crying──

.

While I'm feeling a bit cold after getting sprayed with water, a large fruit is lowering down from the ceiling. It seemed that it descended unnoticed. The ripe fruit has a yellow color.

I thought that it's ripe because a sweet smell envelops the room.

Speaking of its size, it won’t be strange if a person can enter inside it. It’s a really large fruit.

Zelphy-san drew out her sword and steadily thrust at the yellow fruit. The fruit’s skin looked solid. When a vertical crack is slowly made on it, it then split into two and dumped its content outside. It looked ripe, but the inside isn’t fruit flesh or juice. Lumps of metal fell one after another.

No, there is a bit of fruit juice slightly mixed in, wetting the lumps of metal. Black lumps of metal the size of a palm that are more than an armful are falling down. When all the metal have fallen down, the fruit became wrinkled and shrunk. It then fell to the ground.

Zelphy-san whistled, then she looked at the treasure and said "Jackpot".

"It’s a really troublesome dungeon but, in return the payback is good. Everyone gather up. Look carefully, these are rare metals."

The lump of black iron doesn’t feel like simple metal. When I tried taking it in my hand, I slightly felt mana. The metal itself is emitting mana.

Aria-san took it into her hand and said.

"It’s heavy. Can we carry them with our numbers?"

It won’t be a problem if it’s just one, but it will be difficult to carry them all. It might be possible if it’s Sophia-san but……when my thought reached that point, Zelphy-san laughed slightly.

"There isn’t any problem. Look around."

When I looked around like I’m told, it’s really silent. No, it wasn’t like there was always sounds ringing around but, suddenly the place felt different from before.

It seemed we managed to stop the dungeon’s rampage. Zelphy-san pointed at the entrance.

"Try going out from there."

It will be great if I can confirm with my Arts, but right now I don’t have any leeway for that. I can’t even hear the voices of the ancestors, so there is no one to explain it to me.

Unable to hear any voices like this……made me feel lonely, just for a bit.

Ralph-san shouldered his spear and headed toward the entrance. He carefully got out and walked forward, then after a while he came back running.

His face is filled with shock.

"Rondo! We ran really far to reach this room right!?"

"Ye, yeah. What’s wrong Ralph?"

Ralph-san talked about the situation outside excitedly.

"There is a path. There are several rooms along the way. The other adventurers also showed up from there, and when we walked ahead it was outside right away. The campsite was right there!"

Ralph-san spoke as though the vast dungeon had shrunken.

"I see, it “withered”."

We experienced subjugating a dungeon and the withering of a dungeon for the first time. Novem took out a cloth for wiping from the luggage and handed it to me.

"Yes. With this the dungeon subjugation is over. Great work Lyle-sama."

Not everything had gone as planned. But, at the end we obtained a lot of treasure and rare iron metal.

The light shining from the ceiling isn’t the unnatural light of the dungeon anymore. When I thought that everything is over, my waist lost strength and I sat down on the spot.

"Lyle-sama!"

When Novem hugged me, I felt warm.

"Sorry. When I relaxed my consciousness suddenly……"

Rachel-san walked to me.

"Lyle, your complexion is bad."

Sophia-san also approached.

"That’s because you forced yourself. Even so, how does this much metal──"

Everyone’s voices sounded far away. I felt the familiar sensation of my consciousness receding. Being used to this is scary.

Aa, so I’m going to faint again. Even I myself understood it. Even when I’m trying to hold on to my awareness, I can’t resist it with my feeling relaxing thinking that it’s over.

"……Take care, of the rest."

I said that at the end and let go of my consciousness.

Chapter 41 –The End of the Instructional Period

——After Lyle and Rondo's group subjugated the dungeon, guild staff and adventurers entered from outside.

A wagon was prepared. The great amount of discovered rare metal was put on it and transported outside.

Hawkins who entered inside looked at the giant worm lying on the ground. He made a pained expression. He found something shiny from inside the worm's stomach and collected it carefully.

There were seven guild cards there. There was a scratch on all the name columns. It told him that their owners had died.

Hawkins tightly grasped the guild cards.

"I thought that it would be alright this time."

In fact, only parties with some amount of strength were chosen for the dungeon subjugation. Even though the skilled adventurers were in the middle of subjugating other dungeons, the guild had managed to gather quite the number of members.

It was going well until midway. However, eight people died at the end. It pained Hawkins's heart.

Zelphy approached such Hawkins.

"Boss Hawkins, I want to talk with you about some things."

Hawkins turned to Zelphy and nodded.

"It's a fact that you all acted recklessly. But, it's also a fact that you saved three fellow adventurers. I will make the report to the upper brass. But, a part of the treasure might be taken by the guild with some reason they make up."

The demand for rare metal was high. It was to the degree that the supply was insufficient. Because of that, the guild would want the treasure desperately.

The guild would turn a blind eye to the actions of Lyle's group, in exchange they would obtain some rare metal.

"If this matter can be settled with that then that's fine. Also, I can't do this anymore. I'm going to retire."

Hawkins was a bit surprised.

"Zelphy-san, it's not like Zelphy-san has to take responsibility──"

Zelphy didn't look injured at a glance, but she talked about retirement. Hawkins came to a hasty conclusion that she wanted to retire as a form of taking responsibility, but Zelphy shook her head saying that wasn't the case.

"That's not it. Just, it feels like I'm completely spent that I can't go on anymore. My self-confidence to keep going has run out, it feels like there isn't any meaning to it."

Hawkins listened to Zelphy's words and thought.

(It will be hard if a veteran adventurer retired but, Zelphy-san also has her own life.)

"I understand. I'll report about this matter too then. But, in regards to the feudal lord"

Zelphy was an adventurer that was connected to the feudal lord Ventra. Because of that the feudal lord's permission would be needed even if she was going to retire.

"Of course, I'll talk to him myself."

The adventurers were stripping off materials from the giant worm and took out the magic stone inside it. As expected from a boss, the magic stone's radiance was strong. It size was also as big as the fist of an adult.

Amidst that, what stood out was Lyle as expected.

"He has really……grown up splendidly."

Hawkins said that with a wry smile because Lyle was unconscious while being carried by Sophia who was also carrying a large luggage on her back.

Even though he had done something amazing, the finishing was just sloppy.

Zelphy was laughing.

"He is my prided disciple. If that guy becomes famous I'll also be able to act high and mighty. After all, I'll be able to claim that it's me who trained Lyle and his group."

They made jokes while returning to the dismantling work.

Hawkins confirmed that everyone had gotten out of the dungeon and exited last. Then the entrance that was made from twisted trees rapidly withered. The dungeon returned to being a normal forest.

(Now then, I'll have to report to them too.)

Hawkins thought that while heading to the place of the adventurers who came from Centralle──

–

──Inside the tent that was conspicuously extravagant at the campsite.

Hawkins reported about the result of the dungeon subjugation there. The adventurers who came from Centralle scowled at the reckless actions of Lyle, but that was all.

"That is the result of the subjugation this time."

The man who was the leader nodded slightly and said to Hawkins.

"Good work. You can leave."

A condescending way of speaking and haughty attitude. But, Hawkins left the tent without getting angry. It was at that timing.

"……With this we can return to Centralle before that person comes."

Hawkins listened something slightly concerning when he exited the tent. However, he had a mountain of work remaining. He returned to his work rather than thinking about the adventurer's words──

.

The dungeon subjugation has finished and we returned to Dalien after so long.

What is waiting for us there are various procedures.

We're criticized for acting recklessly and it's decided that twenty percent of the treasure will be submitted to the guild. After that, the guild also insisted to buy the remaining amount with the price getting beaten down by thirty percent.

The amount of money is considerable, but I can't accept it no matter what. I think that the guild is also responsible for the matter this time. I faced the small desk that the inn provided and read various documents alone.

"……Err, all the treasures from the treasure boxes are sold, and then the reward for Rondo-san's group in goods are a gauntlet, a ring, and then rare metal……"

That we obtained huge success was also because of the cooperation of Rondo-san's group. I thought that it's fine even if I add something extra to their reward. I talked about it to Novem, Aria-san, and Sophia-san too. Zelphy-san might be busy because she didn't come when we were talking.

While dealing with various things like this, the Fourth who is good with this kind of paperwork is teaching me in detail. No, is he angry?

[Lyle. There are various cases at this kind of time. Selling them separately is also good but, you can also sell them altogether and use that as an excuse to raise the price somewhat. Ah, of course you mustn’t forget to categorize each item. Depending on the situation, it will be easier to walk around carrying treasure rather than gold coin. Think of securing it by yourself too──]

His advice is too many that it felt annoying. Come to think of it, we have a peridot which is our most valuable treasure.

I put it on the table before folding my arms and thought.

"More importantly, what should we do with this? There are also merchants who want to buy it. There is also talk of putting it on auction. Rondo-san’s party said that because we had splurged extravagantly, we should be the ones having this but……"

I lifted the yellow-green magic ore with my hand and said that. Then the Fourth recalled something and yelled.

[Well, first you need to investigate about──wait, AAAAAA!!]

"Wha, what is it?"

I stood up from the chair in surprise, then the Fourth spoke Aria-san’s name.

[Lyle, have you invited Aria properly? We couldn’t check the situation for a while after the dungeon subjugation but, during that time have you given her some kind of present or gone out together with her!?]

Hearing that I tried recalling it, but I was tired after the dungeon subjugation and couldn’t move for two days in which I was sleeping. During that time there was the dismantling work for the people around me, so I ended up simply going back.

But, I don’t have any recollection of doing anything for Aria-san.

"There isn’t anything like that."

Then someone yelled. It wasn't the Fourth but the Fifth. It's too unexpected that the other ancestors are also surprised.

[Stupid idiot! Do something right away! Anything is fine. Give a present of a decent thing that you happen to have on hand, there must be various things!]

Hearing that I looked at the peridot on my hand.

"……The, then how about this?"

I intended that as a joke, but it's troubling that the Fifth responded seriously to that.

[That's overdoing it. Besides how expensive do you think that gem is? What's more it's peridot. Even if Aria will be happy with that, how will the surroundings think……]

I tilted my head.

"I heard that woman like gems though?"

The Fifth taught me about peridot.

[I don't deny that. But, peridot, or rather gems each have their own meaning. It's just like the language of flowers, peridot also has a meaning. Peridot's meaning is so that husband and wife or family's relationship can progress smoothly. How do you think Aria will perceive it? Even if she feels happy receiving it, have you considered what Novem and Sophia will think about it?]

The other party would be troubled if I presented them with a gem that had the price of several hundred gold coins. Or rather, if I gave this kind of thing only to Aria-san, it won't be balanced with the others. That's what the Fifth said.

"Balance is it?"

[That's really important. Listen well, I'll tell you one more time, this is a really important thing!]

Even though normally it’s the Fourth who is persistent about this kind of topic, the Fifth is also overly serious it’s scary. I held up the peridot to my eye’s height and stared at it.

"So even a gem has its own meaning."

The Seventh talked last.

[Well of course. By the way, peridot is “the birthstone of the eighth month” so remember it.]

Thinking that this thing isn’t suitable as a present, I stored it into a leather bag.

"So it has to be a simple present like duranta. Is there anything here?"

I had gone to an outing together with Novem, then I handed a flower to Sophia-san. Now what should I give to Aria-san…….

While I’m thinking that, a knocking sound resounded. I replied and checked who it is. It’s actually Aria-san and I invited her in.

"What’s the matter?"

"Tha, that’s, it’s……about my reward, can you give it to me in advance? I know that not all the treasures have been sold, but I really need it……. I need four gold coins tomorrow. And, I also have one more request."

Speaking of tomorrow, it’s the day when the contract with Zelphy-san will expire. No, more accurately it’s the day that Zelphy-san’s work is over and will get evaluated.

Aria-san continued her words.

"Zelphy, it looks like she will retire after her work coaching us is over. She said it’s because she will marry. So I want to give her something to congratulate her, but she said that she doesn’t need it……that’s why"

There are five grades to evaluate an adventurer's work. However in reality only four grades are used. The greatest grade is B. The reason is because giving grade A will require the client to give an extra reward.

Grade A seldom appears.

In other words, Aria-san wants to give an A grade and pay the additional reward using her own money as substitute for a congratulatory gift. The guild will also take some percentage of that additional reward, even so the majority will definitely be paid to Zelphy-san.

The Third's bright voice came from inside the Jewel.

[Mu! A chance is coming. You can do Aria-chan a favor here as a present for her.]

While I'm thinking that the Third's way of thinking is horrible, the other ancestors seemed to have the same feeling as me.

[Something is wrong with you.]

[The worst.]

[That's a terrible way of thinking.]

[Using calculation instead of good will here is……]

[I think that's fitting for the black-hearted Third.]

The Third's voice turned low.

[……I've no doubt that several of you are also thinking the same thing as me, isn't that right? I think it's more black-hearted to have that thinking while acting like a good person. What? You guys are going to criticize only me?]

'Even you guys are the same', the Third spoke in dissatisfaction.

Inside the Jewel, the atmosphere immediately turned into something like "That’s just not done~" towards the Third. But, here there is also no reason to turn down Aria-san’s idea.

There is none but…….

"Getting your share of reward in advance is not good."

When I said that, Aria-san’s shoulders dropped in dejection.

"Please. Even if you reduce my share──"

"But, if everyone agrees to give grade A for the evaluation and pays the extra reward, then I’ll think about it."

Aria-san lifted her face. I smiled at her and continued talking.

"Let’s talk to them about each person paying a gold coin. If it’s no good then Aria-san and I will pay two gold coins each for the extra reward, how about it?"

Aria-san looked happy.

"Thank you, Lyle!"

.

Aria-san returned to her own inn while I went outside to relax.

There is also how my eyes are tired from looking at nothing but paperwork, but more importantly I wanted to eat. While I’m thinking to search for a food stall, I happened to see someone I knew.

It’s Eva-san.

"Eh, Eva-san. How are you today?"

Eva-san looked around and saw me, then she ran at me and hugged me.

"Lyle, please help me!"

"……Ha?"

I don’t understand the situation. Then Eva-san separated from me and pressed her hand on her stomach. I heard her stomach making a rumbling sound cutely……not. I guessed her situation and so we entered into a random stall.

In the stall that had simple tables and chairs placed, I ordered several types of food and both of us ate them.

Eva-san is eating with a sparkling gaze.

"I’m saved. Geez, it was terrible because my expenses bloated up due to various things."

"Eh? The reward I gave to Eva-san personally was quite much right? I paid quite the amount to Eva-san with reason like having you spread rumors or standing on the stage though?"

Eva-san averted her gaze while laughing.

"About that, you see. That’s right, but there were various necessities you know? Like the stage outfit or cosmetics……after I prepared various things, my money was gone."

‘Tehe’, Eva-san poked at herself, and then she resumed eating. She is eating with gusto like the food is not enough.

After I ordered more, she took out a memo this time.

"Also, I heard that Lyle was making great achievements inside the dungeon but I was unable to hear about it from you yourself. I want to ask you about how you defeated the giant worm in more detail. Like when you entered into its stomach, what did you feel at that time, things like that."

It seemed that this person is also an elf. She wished to listen to the story. I was sleeping on the last day, so she couldn’t ask about the story and felt disappointed it seemed.

"You can ask Novem and the others right?"

"That’s no good. No matter how I look at it the main character is Lyle. It’s fine, the parts where you got carried by a girl or held in a princess carry are pathetic, so I’ll cut them out for you."

I averted my gaze and then laughed bitterly. I ended up talking about everything in exchange of her not circulating the story about my pathetic state.

When we finished eating, I finished talking about everything. Eva-san is in a good mood.

"Yosh, with this there isn’t anything more holding me back here."

"Holding back? Are you going somewhere?"

"I’m thinking to travel to the west. A different troupe from before agreed to take me with them. But, I’ve the feeling that I’ll be able to meet with Lyle again. A fateful reunion, do you like that kind of thing?"

I’m thought that it would be great if we could meet again while I’m about to say sayonara to Eva-san…….

"Then, here I better say, let’s meet again."

"Right. Lyle, let’s meet again."

Eva-san winked and then left. The ancestors made fun of me. The Third is especially horrible.

[Even though you were flustered and completely showing your inexperience inside the dungeon, your treatment to girls has become really skillful now. Is this also thanks to Lyle’s Art──Experience I wonder?]

Experience, an Art that increases the experience I obtain. I don’t understand how much effect it has. With a voice that no one else could hear, I,

"It was really dangerous back there, so I was flustered. It’s because of the fault of some people who said that it’ll be alright at first and yet in the end said that they have never fought the monster before."

I wish they would understand my feelings who got told ‘Leave it to us’ at first only to be forced into a dangerous battle at the end. While I’m thinking that, everyone reacted in puzzlement.

And then, they seemed to notice something. The Second explained to me as their representative.

[Lyle, certainly the dungeon was stimulated. But there should still be some time until it rampaged.]

"……Eh?"

[No, we were thinking that you were really flustered at that time, but it was actually a misunderstanding. At that time the dungeon was still alright. You would make it even if you defeated the giant worm slowly.]

……It seemed that I was misunderstanding and got anxious by myself.

The Fifth understands the reason of my impatience,

[Well, the atmosphere felt like that, so we also matched the mood with you.]

The ancestors matched the mood with me and acted like there was barely any time.

I abruptly felt embarrassed and covered my face with both hands. Even though I worked that hard, now I’m told that it would have been fine to do it normally. My feeling…….

"Then please tell me that."

The Second laughed slightly and said.

[No, we didn’t think that you were misunderstanding. Isn’t it fine? After all you won. I honestly think it’s amazing that you could act to that extent on the spot.]

We won but, at the end I fainted and got carried by Sophia-san with a princess carry. I wish they would understand the feelings of me who got seen like that by everyone in the campsite.

So we could win even without me forcing myself……is that so…….

.

The next day.

We, who are heading towards the guild’s meeting room, evaluated the work of Zelphy-san under Hawkins-san’s observation.

A client has a duty to report the evaluation of the work they requested at the end. The reward would change depending on that.

"Then, the instructional period is over, so please write down the evaluation of Lyle-kun and everyone else into this form."

Most adventurers are on the side of being evaluated, they are rarely on the side giving the evaluation. It’s because when adventurers cooperate with each other like how we joined hands with Rondo-san’s party, the mediation of the guild is rarely needed.

Having the guild mediating between parties would cost money as commission for the guild.

I looked at the faces of Novem, Sophia-san, and Aria-san. After everyone nodded, I wrote A on the evaluation column.

When Hawkins-san received the form, he smiled slightly.

"Grade A as an evaluation will result in an additional reward. All of you know that already right? At the very least you will have to add twenty percent extra."

I nodded and paid twenty percent of the reward which is four gold coins.

Zelphy-san looked really conflicted and scratched her hair.

"……You should have just wrote B like normal."

I looked at Zelphy-san and,

"We heard that Zelphy-san will retire. Besides, you will also marry……if you won't receive anything as congratulations, then this way might be better. That's what we're thinking."

Hawkins-san processed the form quietly without trying to cut in. Zelphy-san received two gold coins. The remaining two gold coins are taken as the guild's share.

We said our gratitude to Zelphy-san.

"Thank you for everything until now."

Novem also lowered her head,

"You have been a really great help. I believe that this evaluation is only appropriate."

Sophia-san looked slightly troubled.

"I only joined from the middle but, that's……thank you very much for your guidance. I have been a real bother……"

She must be referring to the beginning when she received the lowest evaluation of grade E which caused Zelphy-san to go all over the place to apologize.

Aria-san is about to open her mouth, but Zelphy-san doesn't look at her and left the room.

"Zelphy……"

Hawkins-san spoke to Aria-san.

"Please go to her. I think that perhaps she doesn’t want her face right now to be seen."

Aria-san listened to those words and rushed out from the room.

I talked to Hawkins-san.

"Hawkins-san, I also want to say something while we’re here……"

Hawkins-san quietly prepared the paperwork. That is the paperwork necessary when leaving Dalien to notify moving out. It’s also the paperwork necessary for the procedure to begin activity in another city.

"I know. After all, Lyle-kun and your group are in a unique position. I will feel really lonely but, I will be waiting in anticipation to hear about your achievements from here on."

Hawkins-san has a frightening face and a muscular body. He is avoided at the reception desk, but his work is polite and is really friendly.

"It’s me who has been in your debt for various things since the day I registered here……thank you very much."

.

──Zelphy hurriedly walked through the guild’s corridor.

Aria jumped at the back of the leaving Zelphy.

She pushed her face on Zelphy’s back and said her gratitude.

"Zelphy, I……our house became like that, which caused trouble for Zelphy……besides, I was also greatly in your debt. And yet, I couldn’t give anything back to you. Something like that was just lonely so I asked Lyle……"

Aria was crying. Zelphy wiped her tears and spoke. She talked to Aria with a trembling voice.

"I can’t say that it wasn’t hard. But, I too have lived quite a fulfilling life because of that. That’s why, please don’t apologize……Aria-ojousama."

Zelphy turned towards Aria and hugged her.

"Actually, I wanted to take care of you more properly. But, I……I……"

It was the best she could do to just survive by herself. What she could do was only look after Aria from afar.

"Zelphy, thank you. I’m going to go together with Lyle."

Zelphy nodded hearing that.

If she could speak her honest feeling, she wanted to stop her from accompanying Lyle. She wanted her to live a quiet life with her in Dalien.

But at the same time, she also noticed Aria’s talent.

(Aria-ojousama is far more talented than someone like me. Surely rather than getting locked up here, knowing the world outside will be……but)

She could feel relieved entrusting her to Lyle, but there was also anxiety in doing so.

"……If you fall out of love with Lyle, then please come back here anytime. I’ll ask the feudal lord so you can live here."

Aria smiled while crying.

"Thank you. But, it’s fine. Zelphy, I’m fine so……sorry for everything until now. Also, thank you."

Zelphy let out her voice and cried──

.

I filled the moving out notification, then I accepted the moving in notification. I also received the guild card that the guild kept. The moving in notification would be submitted along with the guild card when we moved to another guild.

I left the guild and went alone to a place.

Rondo-san and Ralph-san are waiting. I left my luggage with Novem and moved towards the sweets specialist shop Ciel.

I entered the shop that had a suspicious entrance so that male customer could visit easily. The girls wearing frilly and cute outfits called out "Welcome". Then after looking at my face, they guided me to the table of Rondo-san and Ralph-san.

They’re treating me as a regular customer.

"Oh, you came."

Ralph-san is reading the menu while looking happy at my arrival. Rondo-san is smiling wryly.

"Sorry. Ralph said that he wanted to celebrate here no matter what."

Ralph-san protested.

"Tomorrow we will gather with everyone and party it up at the bar, so today it’s fine to do it here! I want to conquer the whole menu here before leaving Dalien, if not I won’t be satisfied."

I felt a slight pain in my chest hearing Ralph-san’s words.

"As I thought, you three will also leave Dalien then."

When I said that while sitting on the chair, Rondo-san nodded. It seemed he had decided his plans.

"That’s right. This is a really good place, but if we’re going to aim at being first class then we have to advance forward."

Ralph-san talked about their plans going forward.

"Actually, we're thinking of going to Orlan. I made a spear with the rare metal Lyle shared with us. Rachel made a staff, while Rondo──"

"I had my sword reworked, and also asked this to be made at the same time."

Rondo-san put his sword and a short sword with a similar appearance on the table.

"I don't use a shield, so an Art for defense is engraved on it. Ralph's spear is engraved with a Vanguard Type Art, while Rachel has several Rearguard Arts engraved on her staff. That's why, we believe that we're prepared."

If I remember correctly, Zel-jiisan mentioned Orlan when I left my house. It should be a place where mercenary groups and adventurera gathered.

"Isn't it a bit dangerous there? Besides, the number of your party"

Ralph-san explained to me.

"Well, normally that's true. But you know, we have piled up some experience, and all of us has a magic tool of our own. As an adventurer party we are quite a good one like this yeah."

Rondo-san continued.

"Orlan will have a better product line up of things like standard armor, so we will get them there. But, there is a large difference between having a magic tool or not. We're thinking to gather party members there. At that place there is also the border, so knights and soldiers are focused there. There will be a lot of jobs for adventurers, so we'll raise achievements there and gather more people."

Their plan is different from us. That's why, we'll be bidding farewell here.

I'm thinking that, but Rondo-san smiled.

"Eventually we will aim to go to the free city Beim. Lyle-kun is also aiming there right? Then, it will be a race of who will reach there first and become first class."

Hearing that I recalled. My target is becoming a first class adventurer, and the last objective of that is Beim.

"Rondo-san……yes. Let's absolutely reunite again at Beim. Ralph-san too, it's absolutely okay!"

Rondo-san nodded. Ralph-san teased me.

"Of course. But, Lyle……when we reunite, the number of your woman won't increase even more won't it?"

I denied that.

"No, there is no way I can accept only woman into the party! I'll also recruit male comrades!"

Rondo-san laughed, and then he said to order the food because I've arrived. Like that, we got excited talking about our plans in the future and making stupid talk between fellow males.

.

Night.

I showed my face inside the Jewel.

The gazes of the six ancestors gathered on me. There I talked about the plan from here on.

"I'm thinking to go to Arumsaas. It's a academy city and it also has a lot of dojos and private schools. I heard it's also a convenient place to gather comrades."

Based from what I researched, it seemed that it's popular to recruit comrades in Arumsaas. Apparently a lot of adventurers there are polishing their technique while searching for a better party or a party that is convenient for them.

The Second looked surprised.

[I think it’s fine if you also head to Orlan with Rondo’s group though?]

The Third is also a bit surprised.

[Yeah. I remember Lyle saying something about going to Orlan. And they’re friends that you finally made.]

I can’t deny that. I was also invited to come to Orlan with them and I’ve thought about it.

"We have promised. To meet again at Beim. That’s why, I want to become even more stronger before that time I’ll reunite with Rondo-san and the others."

There are a lot of mercenary groups and adventurers in Orlan. It seems there are also a lot of jobs to subjugate monsters there, but the merit of going to Arumsaas is also great. We’ll be able to learn the techniques as adventurers there. Furthermore, it will be something more advanced and special.

We have learned the basics in Dalien, but if we’re going to aim further ahead then I believe that kind of ability will be indispensable.

Also, it will be possible to search for comrades with that kind of ability there.

"Our method might be different but, the objective of me and Rondo-san is the same. That’s why, we will surely meet again."

The Fourth looked a bit happy.

[Very impressive. Rather than going to Orlan following the flow, I respect Lyle’s current thinking more.]

The Fifth is also the same.

[Then, you’ll stop by at Centralle first before heading to Arumsaas from there huh. You will also have some leeway financially for a while, so perhaps this way will be better for Lyle and the others.]

Although they had earned money, Rondo-san's party had spent too much money for their equipment. Besides, it seems they also planned to purchase armor at Orlan. Even if they will be fine for a while, they will have to prioritize working to gather money again.

We're also the same but, we didn't spend that much money to replace our armor and tools. Novem and Sophia-san have their heirloom staff and axe. Aria-san has her red Gem so she is unable to carry a magic tool.

I'm also the same. Even if I'm shopping, it would only be a good quality weapon at most. I want to learn a new skill and the like at Arumsaas while we still have some leeway.

The Sixth isn't enthusiastic.

[Academy city huh, that kind of place has few playing places so it's boring. Rethink it again Lyle.]

The Seventh is exasperated.

[The Sixth likes to play too much. However Lyle, you've become able to think about the future but, it's for the sake of becoming a first class adventurer……I can't welcome it so easily.]

It seems that a part of the Seventh is still unable to accept the fact of me becoming an adventurer as expected.

I'm slightly smiling at the conversation that is just like usual.

The First is gone and there is a lonely feeling. What would the First say if he was here?

I thought that while looking at the great sword floating above the round table.

Chapter 42 – Promise

──Rondo’s party got down from the connecting coach and then they were traveling through a highway by foot toward a city where they would ride the next connecting coach.

"The transportation’s convenience is bad as expected."

Ralph was carrying his new spear on his shoulder. He wore his favorite gauntlet and whined while walking under the clear blue sky.

Rachel was walking while also carrying her new staff.

"It’s the country’s border, what are you going to do if the transportation’s convenience is good? The travel at the border has limitation on it."

It would be a disaster if enemy army invaded. It was thought that was the reason why there was no path for connecting coach at the area.

Rondo corrected Rachel’s mistake. But he put effort to choose his words gently so that he wouldn’t anger her.

"Orlan is using money to maintain the border, so perhaps they can’t spare the money for this. Well, let’s just ask about it when we arrived at Orlan."

They were talking like that while walking. Then they saw a cloud of dust before them. The ground was dry from the sun’s illumination, so it was easy for the sand to flutter up.

"A horse coach is coming. Let’s move aside."

Then Ralph whistled seeing the approaching group.

"They look really extravagant. Are they noble? Quite the number they’re traveling with."

Seeing that the other party was a noble, he moved out to the road so that they wouldn’t carelessly provoke them.

"Don’t stare too much. Come on you two, let’s move out of the road."

When the horse coach got near, Rondo was surprised seeing the number of horses, the number of knights around the group, the horse carriages following from behind, and the number of soldiers.

(The guard is really heavy. Also, with this scale are they a house of count?)

Rondo too originally came from a noble house, so he was more knowledgeable in this area than the other two. Although, Rondo himself thought that the difference between his house and a house of count was like earth and sky.

They were waiting for the noble group to run past them like that , but the coach stopped after it passed Rondo’s group for a bit.

(What?)

The group was coming from the south. From inside that extravagant horse coach, a single girl was getting down with the help of a knight who offered her his hand.

She had blond hair, blue eyes, and a ribbon tied on her hair. She was wearing a coat on top of a white dress. Her appearance looked sweltering under the blazing sun.

However, when he saw that girl, the air felt cold even under this blazing sun.

(What? Just what the hell!?)

Rondo didn’t notice the shaking of his hands. The girl was walking toward Rondo’s group.

The girl was looking at Rondo with a smile. She didn’t even glance at Ralph and Rachel.

"Hey, you there. You have really lovely eyes."

Rondo couldn’t respond to the girl’s words.

"Eh, ah……"

Then the knight standing beside the girl glared at Rondo.

"You bastard, Celes-sama is addressing you. If you don't reply──"

"Alfred, stay back. It's pitiful how he is shaking like that."

"Yes!"

The knight was told off by the girl called Celes and took off his hand from the handle of his sword. If he wasn't told like that he might have slashed already at Rondo.

Rondo had only noticed now that he was shaking after that.

Rachel was looking at Rondo anxiously.

"What's wrong Rondo?"

Ralph also didn't look scared.

"O, oi. Just what's with you man?"

It seemed they didn't think anything about this situation. But, Rondo was sensing a danger with sharper instinct than Ralph.

The girl put her right hand on her chest.

"I am Celes. Celes Walt. I'm taking a liking to you. That's why, I'll let you become my pet."

Rondo didn't understand what the girl before him was saying.

"Wha, what are you……"

Celes made a puzzled face. Rather than feeling surprised, her face was looking curious. And then, Celes put her index finger on her lips.

Rondo was unable to take off his gaze from those lips. It was as though he was going to be sucked in.

"My? This person, could it be he is resisting? Right, there aren't many people like this but they appear sometimes. The Circry sisters before this were also like this. I took a liking to the girl named Miranda but……wait, I guess it's unrelated to you."

Celes said that and smiled, then she touched Rondo's face. His lover Rachel yelled "Wait!", but Celes didn't pay her any mind.

"Many of the children who doesn't get charmed right away has excellent quality. I like you. I'll let you stay by my side."

Rondo felt terror at those words. He felt surprised at his feeling that thought Celes as beautiful and wanted to kneel before her…….

(No good. This is no good! I promised……right, the promise!)

He recalled his promise with Lyle. It was the dream of the three of them to become first class adventurer.

Rondo slowly pushed back Celes's hand and opened his mouth.

"Please allow me to refuse. We……have things to do."

Then the smile vanished from Celes's expression.

"……I see. You won't become mine. Then that's fine, disappear."

Right after that, the knight standing beside Celes unsheathed his sword. Ralph thrust his spear toward that knight.

"Rondo, take Rachel and run!"

"Ralph!"

Rondo unsheathed his sword in panic, but the next instant his right arm was cut off. In his surprise, he saw Celes in front of him was already holding an expensive looking rapier. The cut off right arm was hacked apart, and even the sword that had just gotten reforged was easily cut to pieces.

"What, you're weak. My expectation was wrong."

She said that and lost interest, then she looke at Rachel who was running toward Rondo and swung her rapier. Even though Rachel wasn’t in the strike range, her staff was cut and blood spurted out from her body.

Rondo screamed while running toward her, then he hugged her body.

"Rachel!"

A lot of blood was flowing out. The dry ground was sucking Rachel’s blood. Rachel’s left hand grabbed Rondo’s clothes. Her finger was wearing a ring that they found in the dungeon.

"E, eh……Rondo, I……can’t feel my strength. I can’t see……Rondo, where are you? Hey, I’m……scared"

Rachel vomited blood from her mouth. The blood overflowing from her chest wouldn’t stop. Rondo hugged Rachel’s body while looking at Ralph.

"A, aa……"

Ralph was floating in the air while struggling. It was as though he was being lifted up by something unseen……and then, his chest was stabbed by the knight’s saber. Ralph vomited blood and struggled, but before long he let go of his spear midair and stopped resisting. His body didn’t move anymore. After that Ralph was sent flying and rolled on the ground.

The knight called Alfred looked down on Ralph and muttered.

"Small fry. How dare you waste Celes-sama’s time."

Celes smiled kindly. She was smiling in this situation.

"It’s alright Alfred. More importantly let’s get back to the coach. It’ll be a problem if we let Otou-sama and Okaa-sama waiting."

"Yes-!"

The two of them turned their back to Rondo and the others and walked toward the horse coach.

Rachel died in his hands. Ralph had also stopped moving. Rondo slowly put Rachel down, and then he drew out his short sword with his left hand.

"You all……YOU ALLLLLLL!!"

Rondo dashed. Alfred turned toward him and drew out his saber, but Celes stopped him.

Celes turned around and smiled at Rondo. It was a really ugly smile.

Right after that, Celes's right hand held her rapier. And then, her left hand held the short sword that Rondo unsheathed.

"Wha-!"

'What happened?' Before he could think that, Rondo fell on the ground.

"Hm~, this short sword has an Art engraved. Perhaps I should carry this for a reward."

The collapsed Rondo looked up at Celes and Alfred. But, the two of them already lost interest at him.

"If it is within Celes-sama's hand, then even a random pebble will become a priceless heirloom."

Celes got into a good mood hearing that.

"Is that so? Then, I'll give this to Alfred."

Alfred was really happy his face looked like he really was going to cry. He kneeled on the ground and received the short sword with both hands. The surrounding people watched that with a really envious look.

It was an absurd scene. The people around them were only watching that quietly. An abnormal sight was happening in that place.

"My deepest gratitude! This Alfred Virden sweat my eternal loyalty to Celes-sama."

Hearing that, Celes cutely got angry as though to say ‘That’s troubling!’.

"Geez! What will you do about Otou-sama and Okaa-sama!? I’ll take it back if you’re saying such thing."

She was a cruel girl. However she seemed to have strong emotional attachment toward her parents.

"My, my apologies. Of course, this self is devoted toward Walt House."

Celes nodded with a smile.

"Very good. Now, I have to get back to the coach. Otou-sama and Okaa-sama are looking over here worriedly."

Celes said that and got into the coach, then the group resumed their travel as though nothing had happened. The collapsed Rondo and others were covered by the cloud of dust.

After the group left, Rondo noticed that he had lost both his hands without him noticing. Blood was flowing out. He was already beyond saving.

He crawled on the ground toward Rachel, then he bit on Rachel’s clothes and dragged her until they reached Ralph.

He shed his tears. And then he looked at his important comrades who were bleeding and had passed away.

"Rachel, Ralph……sorry. I’m sorry. To end in this kind of place……I’m really sorry"

The consciousness of Rondo who was apologizing to the two was also getting faint. The three of them were lying down on the side of the road, lying on top of each other.

Rondo squeezed out his voice.

"Tou-san, Kaa-san, Nii-san……looks like this is it for me. Even though I talked impudently and left the house, I'm sorry"

Like that Rondo thought back about Lyle at the end.

"The promise with Lyle-kun……I can't fulfill it"

Rondo closed his eyes, and then he took the last deep breath and stopped moving.

Here, a party lost their lives abruptly──.

.

Before departing from Dalien.

For some reason I'm suddenly feeling lonely. Surely it's because the day we're leaving Dalien is getting near.

I have finished greeting almost all the people we became obliged to during our time here. I visited the mansion of Ventra-san last and talked with him.

One of the reasons of me coming here is also because he told me to turn up here through Zelphy-san. It seems he want to make a deal with me. When I talked with Ventra-san, the topic about rare metal came up just as expected.

"I have heard, Lyle-dono. It seems you have a considerable amount of rare metal remaining in your possession."

A part of it was taken away by the guild and bought with reduced price, so I don't have that much in hand. There was also the reward for Rondo-san and his party and payment for supplies, so I only have little amount remaining in my possession.

"We got too reckless and the rare metals got bought with reduced price though. And this time I teamed up with other party, so I also needed to give the reward for them. Because of that the remaining amount in my possession is only a little."

I'm also thinking to order a saber when we stopped by at Centralle. I'm keeping some amount of rare metal in my possession for that, but Ventra-san said that he wanted to buy them.

"I'm fine with the amount remaining in your possession. I want you to sell them to me. Don't worry, I want reduce the price like the guild."

He told me the price. I pretended to think for a bit.

The Fourth didn't mind with the price.

[It's pointless to quarrel with him here. Besides, Lyle cannot use magic tool. In that case, there is no need to force yourself to get fixated with rare metal.]

Thinking that it's true, I decided to accept the price and sold the rare metal. Ventra-san's retainer will come to my place later to pick up the rare metal.

Even so, the amount of money that Ventra-san paid to me is a lot. It's too much.

"……Err, what's with this amount? It doesn't seem balanced with the amount of rare metal that I have."

Ventra-san grinned even while the color of his gaze became slightly stern.

"Actually, I'm feeling a bit irritated with the guild's work this time. Rodornia House's policy is to gather adventurer to use them as labor force. There are a lot of necessary things for that like the improvement of public order and the like but……the guild's cooperation is also essential."

The Sixth said "I see".

[The attitude of that girl Santoa, if they’re careless then it will become a rumor that adventurer is made light here. That won’t be a good thing.]

Ventra-san drank tea while continuing his talk like he is gossiping.

"And yet the guild made a blunder and blamed it all on Lyle-dono. In my position I can’t pretend to not see that. That’s why, the part that the guild took away with made up reason and the part they bought with reduced price, I’ll buy them from Lyle-dono."

It seems that this amount is to replace the part that was taken away from us.

"That’s really lavish of you Ventra-san."

Ventra-san laughed.

"Yes, I’m feeling good after all. Actually, a branch of Dalien guild is formed in a place that is hard to reach because of the territory’s circumstance. It had been a problem for quite some time, but it has been resolved which give me a good mood."

When I asked for more detail, it’s a place in Ventra-san’s territory that is some distance away from the city. It seems to be a rural area that is late in getting developed. Apparently a “branc” of Dalien adventurer guild is set up there. It’s hard to dispatch knight or soldier to that place and many monsters appeared there.

"In that case, setting up a guild there right from the start instead of just a branch will be──"

The Fifth laughed slightly at my words.

[Lyle, in this case you should think that there is meaning in the place being a branch of Dalien guild. Let’s see, that place sounds like a destination for demotion.]

I noticed and then I mentioned a name of a guild staff.

"──Is it Santoa-san?"

Ventra-san nodded.

"You’re sharp. But, it’s not just that Maie girl alone, but her parent too. Apparently because the parent was one of the guild’s top brass, the daughter was doing whatever she pleased. Even though I had firmly told them about my policy and worked hard doing various things in order to gather beginner adventurer……don’t you think it’s terrible of them to waste my effort like that? But, it seems that the two of them will be happily working in that branch together from now on. It’s really a happy matter."

The Third sounded delighted.

[It’s his way to show the guild who is the boss here by making them as example. Perhaps those Maie parent and child are experiencing something even more horrible there than what we are imagining.]

This is a punishment for Santoa-san. No, perhaps it’s directed to the guild.

I stood up.

"I have received the payment. I will hand over the remaining rare metal immediately."

"Please do so."

.

At the terminal of the connecting coach toward Centralle from Dalien.

Hawkins-san and Zelphy-san came to see us off leaving Dalien.

The female shopkeeper and her husband the blacksmith has work and cannot come. They were really sad hearing that Novem is leaving Dalien.

Other than them, the owner of the inn we were staying at told us to do our best. It’s now that I can keenly feel we had met various encounters, big and small.

Zelphy-san is talking with Aria-san.

"Listen well, you mustn’t be too reckless."

"Zelphy, you worry too much."

Novem and Sophia-san are talking with Hawkins-san. As for me, I’m putting our luggage in order and then what’s left is only to wait for the departure time.

Inside the Jewel the Second said"There’s a guest", so I looked at the approaching person. There, Rex-san and someone who seemed to be a supporter from Sword Wings were standing.

Their faces are bruised all over. They looked even worse than the time we saved them at the dungeon.

"……Lyle."

"Ye, yes. Err, what is it?"

I who am addressed by Rex-san is wondering what he will say. Then he suddenly bowed his head to me.

"I haven’t said my thanks for getting saved. Also, I came to apologize. Sorry to cause trouble for you. Also, thank you for saving us."

The supporter also said his thanks to me.

Strange. There should be one other person. Thinking so my gaze wandered around. Rex-san seems to notice that and smiled a bit sadly.

"The other one retired from being adventurer. It seems he will settle down in Dalien."

Retiring as adventurer. Hearing that, I don’t know what to say.

Rex-san looked understanding.

"It’s our own problem so don’t mind it. Besides, we have talked it out and understood each other. But, we’re still adventurer. There are only two of us left but, we will start over."

It felt like he has turned somewhat mellow compared to when I first met him. Then, Rex-san declared to me.

"You’re going to Beim too right? Then, I will also go there without fail. Right now I’m really falling behind but, I’ll catch up with you no matter what. Let me say my thanks to you again at that time. Right now we’re in a really tight spot though."

The two of them really looked battered.

It’s not like I was expecting any thanks, even so I think saying this to these two right now will be good.

"Then, I’ll be waiting. Let’s meet at Beim."

Rex-san smiled with his wounded face.

"Yeah, absolutely. At that time I’ll treat you to a drink."

With this I’ve made promise to two parties, with Rondo-san and Rex-san. I muttered"I’ve to do my best" with a small voice and boarded the connecting coach with destination to Centralle in order to fulfill these promises.

.

Inside the connecting coach that departed from Dalien.

I’m looking outside the window in a daze. Aria-san and Sophia-san are talking inside the coach about various things.

Sophia-san is a bit nervous.

"It will be my first time at Centralle……"

Centralle is also the birthplace of Aria-san, but she looked conflicted.

"In my case, I have acquaintances there. I don’t want to get seen by them. I don’t know what they’ll say to me."

Novem looked at me.

"Lyle-sama, are we going to head to Arumsaas immediately?"

I thought for a bit and shook my head.

"I want to look around for weapon and other things. Besides there is also a place I want to stop by for a bit."

"A place to stop by? Is there a place that Lyle-sama is curious about?"

When we headed to Dalien, we only stopped by for a bit at Centralle. Novem must never have even imagined that I’ll have a place I want to visit there.

The Seventh seems to notice my thinking and told me to not have too big of expectation.

[Lyle, don’t expect too much. Although both houses were originally the same Walt House, right now we are two different houses. They weren’t decent bunch even at my time.]

The place that I want to visit is the house that was the beginning of our feudal lord house──the main Walt House that was a capital noble.

"Centralle’s Walt House. They still exist right?"

Novem’s expression distorted. She looked like she really didn’t want to get involved with them.

"Yes. But, the relationship between both houses has been severed since really long time ago. Besides, I heard that they once acted like a beggar toward the previous head Brod-sama. Lyle-sama shouldn’t get involved with them."

Acted like a beggar? Then the Seventh explained to me.

[It was because I was an adviser of the royal family. They contacted me hoping to receive some benefit from that, but the Walt House of Centralle at that time, they were of the lowest rank and didn't have any post……they were noble in name only that didn't even have any job.]

I recalled that the Seventh was an adviser of the royal family. It seemed that they hoped to make use of that connection.

"Even so, I want to have a look."

Just how much the scenery of Centralle that I watched with the First has changed? I just wanted to walk through the place I saw in the memory room.

"Is it no good?"

Novem made a slightly troubled look, and then she nodded reluctantly.

"If that what Lyle-sama wish."

I'm relieved that Novem gave me permission. Because if she opposed me strongly, I'm not going to ignore her and still go there.

Rather than saying that I'm curious of Walt House of Centralle, I simply want to know what has changed with that place that I walked together with the First.

.

We arrived the next day.

I stood stock still in front of the house that I saw in the First's memory room.

Even if I downplay it, I can only call the house as worn-out. The garden isn't tended too with weeds growing everywhere. The wall is cracked. I will believe it if I'm told that no one is living here.

"It’s worse than my imagination."

Novem is looked at me in exasperation. No, she isn’t even trying to hide her disgust. Because of that her tone is stricter than usual.

"That’s why I told you. It’s laughable to even compare this house with the feudal lord house Walt House. After all it’s a house that never receive any post no matter how much time passed, a house that cannot even be called noble and simply existing pointlessly."

The Second is a bit troubled.

[It’s rare that Novem-chan is emotional like this. Well, certainly I also don’t have any good memory about them even at my era.]

Certainly, it’s rare that Novem is showing disgust so much like this.

As expected we can’t keep making noise at the entrance like this. We moved away from there.

I thought that perhaps I would be able to meet with someone from Centralle’s Walt House, but it looks like it’s better to not meet them at all.

Chapter 43 – Holiday at Centralle

In Centralle’s weapon shop.

All the sabers that are showed to me by the shopkeeper are intended for battle with little decoration. I thought there would be many saber with a lot of decoration for the sake of viewing, but this is a nice surprise.

"There are a lot of sabers with unrefined design, or I should say that they’re intended for battle."

When I said that, the shopkeeper explained to me.

"There are also a lot of artisans that hate decoration or have strong obsession that they can only make thing like this. Well, I don’t stocked up a lot of this thing there is no problem. With the trend right now, rather than this, the one put up on the wall over there is more popular."

A saber was decorating the wall. It was inlaid with gold, silver, and gems as decoration. It’s not like it’s unusable for real battle, but that kind of thing made me hesitate to use it as disposable item.

It looked like it’s strongly leaning to be a work of art.

"……It’ll be a waste to swing it around in real battle."

"After all you won’t expect battle to happen at Centralle. People with job as knight, soldier, or adventurer and mercenary will prefer firmer weapon rather than saber."

Well, I guess so. Until now I never saw any adventurer who is using saber.

I took one saber.

"Then, can I meet with the blacksmith who created this?"

By doing that I’ll be able to ask the blacksmith to create something that is more to my preference, but then the shopkeeper shook his head. Is it no good just as expected?

"I bought the merchandise from the north, so I didn’t really know who made them. Instead, if it’s the blacksmith at Centralle then I can introduce you to them."

It can’t be helped. For now I’ll choose one that seems good and purchase it. From here, if I’m thinking to use one saber for a long time, then perhaps custom-made will be the best.

Even if right now is impossible, someday I’ll ask a blacksmith I can trust to make it.

The saber I purchased is made solidly for real battle. It doesn’t look like I’ll need to buy a replacement for it for a while.

.

I who left my luggage in the inn went out with a single saber hanging on my waist.

Novem, Aria-san, and also Sophia-san were going out for shopping. I’m walking alone through Centralle’s street.

But──.

"……I’ve nothing to do."

When I said that, the Sixth raised his voice happily.

[Lyle, the time has come for even you to experience having fun!]

I became curious at the having fun that the Sixth said and tightly grabbed the Jewel, asking him to continue. For some reason the Fifth and the Seventh are making displeased voice inside the Jewel.

[It makes me uneasy when you’re the one saying that.]

[I think it’s wrong getting taught about having fun by someone who had fun too much.]

The Sixth made a forced cough, and then he continued from there.

[Even Lyle need hobby. It's important to find something that you're interested at. And so, Lyle……walk straight through this street, and then turn right.]

When I advanced to the place that the Sixth instructed me to, I came out in a street that was obviously indecent. There is a noisy establishment at such street.

A staff with scary face wearing black suits was standing in front of the establishment with his back straight. However, the Sixth seemed to have business with this place.

[Yosh, get inside!]

The Fourth is exasperated.

[Gambling? That's exasperating. This kind of place is made so that the management will win. It's already pointless from the start.]

The Third's opinion is a bit different.

[It's fine if it's just testing your luck moderately, as long as you don't ruin yourself.]

Like that I stepped inside the casion but──.

First is card game.

[Trump is the staple game.]

The Sixth said that and checked my hand. It seems to be a game that is done with the other customers. The opinion of the ancestors is split here.

[I've got a bad feeling. You better give up this round!]

[But his hand's lineup isn't so bad isn't it? Let's exchange the card and watch the situation for now. Exchange three of them at least.]

[Isn't that most of them? Playing safely here──]

[Anything is fine, let’s just do it quickly.]

[Go! You should make the bet here Lyle!]

[No, this is where you should be firm and steady!]

What are they telling me to do? I’m thinking for a while, then I tried exchanging two of my cards. It became two pairs so I tried making the bet, but the other customer has better combination and I lost.

The Second spoke triumphantly.

[That’s why I told you guys. It’s better to give up!]

The other ancestors seemed to be irritated at the smug Second. And so the game continued as it is. Sometimes I won, but a lot of the time I lost. In the end several pieces of silver coin vanished in the blink of eye. There is only one coin remaining in my hand.

Or rather…….

"Why are we buying coin in casino? It will be easier to do it with real coins."

The Fourth spoke philosophically in respond.

[Well, the world is a complex place. So, are you finished with this?]

The Sixth yelled.

[Not yet! There is still a lot of way to have fun! Lyle, next is……that!]

It seems to be a game of throwing a small ball into a rotating circle and we have to guess where the ball will stop.

Honestly, I’m not really interested but I tried it out.

The result──.

[……Isn’t Lyle, strong?]

It’s just as the Second said, I continued to win. The Third is also surprised.

[He’s too strong. Or rather, it’s scary that he’s this strong. The surrounding is also shocked.]

The other customers and staffs are also shocked seeing me continuing to win.

The coins in my possession have grown until double my original amount. If I exchanged it into money it felt like I can get a gold coin.

The Sixth is excited. He is wondering which number to gamble next.

Looks like he is looking forward to it.

[Yosh, Lyle, next where should──]

──Or rather, I have enough.

"I’ll try other game."

[Oi. ……Oi! You, you have win this much, and yet you!]

The Sixth complained to me, but I took my coins and played another game. After that, I tried various things but…….

When I got out of the casino, I ended up with one silver coin more than the amount that I paid at the beginning.

I won, lost, won, lost……at the end it’s a plus, but to only get one silver coin after spending that much time……was it worthwhile? The earning is better than working normally but, it really doesn’t suit me.

"……Let’s go back."

A silver coin. Let’s use it to eat with everyone. It seems that I’m not suited with casino.

.

──Aria was shopping at Centralle with Novem and Sophia.

They were mainly purchasing clothes, and then things like consumable goods. As to be expected from Centralle, the capital of Bahnseim, the variety of goods was abundant.

Aria who was holding her baggage with both hands was in a good mood after shopping.

"How nice~, it’s great that there are a lot of things available in Centralle. The tools I’m using in work are also damaged so I needed to buy new ones as replacement."

Sophia was also the same.

"We’re buying a bit too many clothes though."

Novem looked at the two and chuckled.

"They’re necessary after all. But, we might need to economize a bit at Arumsaas."

Aria was a bit surprised hearing that.

"Eh!? We bought too much?"

Aria and the two girls, or rather Lyle’s party wasn’t troubled with money right now. However, even that much money would be used up quickly by their livelihood as adventurer.

Novem shook her head.

"No, just this much isn’t any trouble at all. But, we’ll be heading to Arumsaas after this. If we want to learn something there, we will need money."

Sophia recalled about Arumsaas and talked.

"In Arumsaas we can learn any kind of knowledge or skill if we pay money. It’s called as academy city, is it an educational institution? I heard there is also school there but, I also heard that it’s a city that take money to live there."

Aria pondered a bit.

"Putting aside knowledge, skill is it……should I think that we can learn it as long as we can pay the money? Besides, is a skill something that can be learned that easily?"

Novem slightly lifted her face and explained to the two.

"Depending on the situation it might take years. If it's not something difficult then it will take several weeks I believe. But, there is no problem even if we don't force ourselves to learn. After all we can also invite adventurer with the necessary skill into our party."

A new comrade. Lyle's party was categorized as a party with few members as adventurer. Due to that they could move easily, but it could also be said that the burden on each of them was big.

Thinking of that, it was only natural to increase the number of party member and decreased the burden to each member. It wasn't like they were aiming to be a party of small elite force.

(Well, we'll just normally add more party member then. Hm?)

There Aria noticed.

"Come to think of it, why didn't Novem invite Rondo-san's group? I heard that Lyle refused their invitation but, they are good people. Besides, Rachel-san also invited you right?"

Novem made a slightly complicated expression when Aria asked the reason why they didn't make Rondo's party as their comrade.

"Certainly, Rachel-san had invited me several times. But, we're a party with Lyle-sama as the leader. While Rondo-san is the leader over there……this might sound horrible but, there is no need for two leaders. After all in that case it will have to be decided who is above who."

In case they joined with each other, which one would have the right to decide? And then their own rule that they had followed until now would have to be changed greatly. If they joined both parties just because they got along with each other, it would become a big problem. That was Novem's explanation.

"Besides, I wanted Lyle-sama’s friend to stay as his friend."

Sophia looked understanding.

"They won’t be able to keep the friendship if it goes poorly after all. Certainly, perhaps it can be said that it’s better to not combine the parties."

Aria didn’t understand what they meant, but she was convinced because the two of them were saying that.

(Is it something like that? It feels like it can go well if it’s with those three though.)

"Then, how many people are we going to invite into the party at Arumsaas?"

Novem was about to answer Aria’s question, but another person’s voice interrupted her.

"You, could it be you are Lockwarde?"

There two girls were standing. They were wearing lovely and expensive looking clothes, They looked at Aria and laughed scornfully.

(These girls)

Aria scowled. The reason was because these girls were her friends when she was living at Centralle. Although they became estranged when Lockwarde House declined.

Those two looked at Aria from the top of her head until the tips of her toes and laughed.

"What’s with that getup? Aren’t you embarrassed dressing like a commoner?"

"Don’t be stupid. She is already a commoner. Lockwarde House has been abolished. They were chased out from Centralle and their peerage stripped off. ……And, why are you at Centralle now?"

Sophia whispered into Aria’s ear.

"Are they your acquaintance?"

Aria answered with a displeased look.

"They’re daughter of capital nobles in Centralle. I don’t want to get involved with them so let’s go."

Although she called them friend, they were only getting along because of the relationship between their houses. That was why, they stopped being her friend when her house declined. And in the first place they weren’t even the type of person that she liked.

Furthermore, their houses framed Lockwarde House to save their own hide. They were capital nobles that committed the same crime like Lockwarde House, but they pushed all the blame to Aria’s family and acted like they hadn’t done anything.

Novem also guessed it and walked away from there, but the girls seemed to think that their reaction was irritating.

"Wait. You were told to leave Centralle right? I’ll report that you’re here right now."

The girl grabbed Aria’s shoulder and picked a quarrel. Aria forcefully brushed off her hand and glared.

"There is no problem if I’m only staying here for a short time. It’s not like it concerns you two anyway."

The two laughed scornfully at Aria’s challenging attitude.

"You who aren’t even a noble can’t possibly know even a slightest part of our feeling. In that case, we’ll call for people right away to deal with you."

Aria was about to open her mouth, but Novem took a step forward.

"What do you want?"

"My apologies. My name is Novem Forxus. I too am originally a noble. And I’m also Aria-san’s friend. I cannot overlook this."

Then one of the girls glared at Novem, but the other girl went pale hearing Novem’s surname.

"Forxus, you said……let’s go"

"What! Why do we have to run away from them huh!?"

One girl forcefully pulled the other girl and the two of them left Aria and others.

Sophia saw that and looked astonished.

"Say, is that normal in Cetralle? No matter what that’s just……"

Aria understood what Sophia wanted to say. No matter what those girls were too haughty. But, in a large country that was the great Bahnseim, that kind of people numbered a lot among the nobles.

Rather, those girls were still at a cute level.

"Something like that is still cute. The terrible kind will be even more terrible……even so, Novem’s family name is really effective. As expected, is it because your house is a feudal lord noble?"

Novem was watching the leaving two girls seriously. And then, she replied to Aria.

"As expected my family isn’t that famous. But we’re connected to Walt House, so perhaps they’re wary of that."

The three headed back to their inn after that to put down their luggage──.

.

"……Haa, there is still time."

Because Novem and others are shopping, I’m wandering aimlessly alone.

Even the casino didn't feel that interesting for me. The having fun that the Sixth suggested also became things like alcohol or woman so the other ancestors opposed him.

There is no problem with alcohol, but it's still too early right now to drink. How can I meet Novem and others in a drunk state? The Fourth strongly opposed it.

It's also the same regarding playing with woman. For this one it was the Fifth who strongly opposed it. The Second was also of the same opinion.

But, the Third was──.

[Shouldn't Lyle get more familiar with woman a bit more? I'm in agreement with that idea.]

The Sixth recovered his vitality after obtaining a supporter for his idea.

[Exactly! Lyle, experience is the most important thing. Have fun for a bit before meeting the girls.]

The Seventh is silent. Or rather, it made me curious what is the Seventh thinking silently like that.

"Even if you told me that, having fun like that when the sun is still high like this is just……"

While I'm walking like that, I smell a really disgusting scent. It's a smell that felt rotten. I frowned, but the people walking around me don't seem bothered.

While I'm walking the street like that, a shop entered my eyes.

Tools are placed at the shopfront. Looking at that it seems that it's a shop for "fishing gear".

The Second talked to me seeing that.

[Then, I'll teach you fishing.]

The Second will teach me fishing that the First didn’t manage to teach to me. I tightly gripped the Jewel and entered the shop. I purchased a set of fishing gear.

.

"Uwaa……it’s dirty."

It seems the true identity of the disgusting smell is the river. Trash is flowing following the river’s flow. A great amount of trash that got stuck at both sides of the river and unknown things are floating in the water.

When I thought that I’ll make my fishing debut in this kind of place, it made me felt unpleasant.

The Second is also troubled.

[This is terrible. Is there any fish here?]

When I looked around, I can see several people here and there who are also fishing. It also will be a waste if I bought this fishing gear and doesn’t use them, so I prepared like the Second taught me and dangled the fishing line.

"……No fish is coming."

The Third opened his mouth in surprise.

[No, you won’t catch anything right after you started!]

I sat down at a random spot and then watched the river in a daze. Looking closer, the river’s color looked really similar with the inside of slime’s body. It’s a muddy green color, or perhaps a yellow-green color with viscous quality. Don’t the people living in Centralle feel anything looking at this river?

The Fourth recalled the past in nostalgia.

[Come to think of it, I played in the river in the past. Though as expected you will get sick if you enter inside this river.]

The Third also felt nostalgic.

[I remember the Fourth was really happy when we went out to play water. Well, I was also the same. I often played with Nii-san. Or rather, the fish caught in this river……will it be edible?]

The Seventh rejected that in his worry for me.

[There is no way Lyle can eat a fish that is living inside water this dirty. Lyle, absolutely don't eat any fish here. Remember that, absolutely don't!]

Even without him pushing me like that, I only want to experience fishing and don't think of eating anything that I catch. The Second talked about the past.

[At the countryside the river's water is clean, there will be a lot of fish too. Depending on the type of the fish, you will be able to eat the grill the fish right away or you'll have to bring it home to take out the mud before grilling it……I don't think fish that is living in this river will be edible even if you drain out the mud from it.]

The Fifth spoke with a slightly envious tone.

[I once played water in the mansion. But, I never went fishing.]

The Sixth is different.

[I fished when I went out. At that time I would bring back the fish and made a woman……it's nothing.]

The Seventh yelled.

[Oi! Wait a second! Just now, you said woman! Fess up! Don't tell me that you had more woman other than "mothers"! If I actually learn at this late that I have other siblings──]

When the Sixth completely fell silent, the inside of the Jewel immediately became noisy. The ancestors criticized the Sixth in turn starting from the Second.

[You, as expected that's just……]

[I think it’s improper to keep a mistress outside. Besides, you already had other woman outside of your legal wife right?]

[The worst. It’s even worse than Lyle.]

[You……what is the meaning of this! After troubling me that much, yet you were actually still hiding something huh!?]

[Spit it out! Spit out everything here!]

I thought they are noisy. Also, the Sixth’s hopelessness is getting conspicuous lately. In Walt House’s history, the Sixth was a house head that survived through a rigorous era and expanded the territory. And yet, to think that he has a lot of hopeless sides like this…….

Then the Sixth yelled.

[Aaa~h, shut up! I already finished squaring that kind of relationships, and the Seventh has no other “sibling”. That’s the truth! ……Oh, Lyle, your bait is catching something there.]

The Sixth forcefully changed the topic at the end but there is nothing that can be done anyway even if the truth is exposed this late.

The fishing line caught something so I tried reeling it. The fishing rode bent. The weight I’m feeling is quiet heavy, but what came out from the river isn’t a fish.

Something with eerie color, or rather something with something slushy sticking on it is there.

I reeled it up and looked the thing dangling in midair.

"……What is, this? It has pincers."

The Second laughed.

[That’s a crayfish. It can be eaten but, it’s safer to avoid it. Just let it go back into the river.]

I followed his words and moved to let it go, but then the Second yelled.

[Oi, you idiot!]

"Ouch!"

My finger got pinched by the pincer. It happened right after I let it go, so the crayfish immediately jumped to the river after that.

"……Haa, I should go back."

I tidied up the fishing tools. It’s also the right time so I headed to the inn to meet up with Novem and the rest.

The Third is a bit disappointed.

[Hm~, so fishing is also no good. What should we recommend next?]

I rolled the Jewel with my fingertips. The result was terrible but, it’s not like I hate fishing. But, next time I’m fishing, I want to try doing it while relaxing at a cleaner river.

I might quiet like it. While waiting I can also listen to the ancestors talking to kill time, it feels like this is suited for me.

With a toolbox in left hand and the rod in my right hand leaning on my shoulder, I walked toward the inn. While thinking that next time I’ll also invite Novem, I found Novem and the rest in an argument with someone in front of me. They are in a dark alley that is far from public eyes.

They’re in argument with people I don’t know.

The other side is a girl with three men that she brought with her. From the atmosphere, the situation doesn’t look good at all.

The Fourth hurried me.

[That’s not an amusing sight. Lyle, hurry.]

Being told that I ran to Novem and others. There I can hear their voice. The unknown girl is yelling angrily at Novem and others.

"I don’t know if you’re related to a feudal lord noble or what, but there is no way my pride will allow me to shrink back from someone who is expelled from her house!"

When I hurriedly came running, Aria-san and Sophia-san looked a bit relieved seeing me.

"Lyle, nice timing."

"Certainly, this helps."

I asked the situation.

"err, what happened? Or rather, what is this situation……"

Novem looked at me and shook her head.

"She is Aria-san’s acquaintance, but it seems she is displeased with my attitude. Because of that she gathered some men and came to retaliate."

I looked at the girl and the three men behind her. The three are carrying weapons. From the sword dangling on their waist, are they adventurer…….

Then the Sixth snorted.

[They’re lowest ranked capital noble, or else they’re second son or third son who haven’t become independent……this girl are bringing really weak bunch huh.]

The Seventh is also calm.

[Well, the status of Lyle and others right now is weak even if they are also noble in the past. However this girl, doesn’t she have more skilled people that she can bring with her? ……No, that was rude of me. It’s stranger to expect more than this from the capital noble.]

Then the ancestors inside the Jewel simultaneously laughed. I don’t understand what is funny. There is also no time to ask so I stepped forward.

"I'll apologize if they have done anything rude."

The girl looked at me and scoffed.

"Aren't you a fitting man for these ruined bunch. From your shabby appearance……adventurer? A lowly man really is suitable for these lowly girls!"

No good, her words aren't even a reply. Or rather, it's troubling how belligerent this girl is. The opponent is three men, but it might become something troublesome if I injured them.

From a glance I don't feel like I'll lose against them. Their movement is also bad, and the weapon on their waist also doesn't look cared. But, picking a fight against noble is something I'm hesitating to do.

While I'm thinking of what to do, the rod in my right hand entered my eyes.

"Enough already. Give them a good shaking. Aim at the face for the girls. Also, you three can do whatever you like with them later. Ah, but don't kill them. After all it's funnier to have them live miserably."

It's an unthinkable way of speaking for a girl. The three at the back unsheathed their weapon, so I handed the toolbox in my left hand to Novem.

"Lyle-sama?"

"I'm fine with this thing."

When I held up the rod, the opponents looked at my face, then they looked at each other and laughed.

"What, this guy want to fight with a fishing rod?"

"Is that weapon on your waist just a decoration? Okay then, I'll take it for myself while I'm at it."

"Prepare to get embarrassed in front of those girls."

How should I say it, it’s the first time I’m hearing lines this terrible said to me. Adventurers also have bad mouth but, it felt like few of them are actually as horrible as these three.

I recalled the time when I fought the bandits. Ah, their atmosphere is the same like bandit. Is it fine like that, Bahnseim’s capital noble?

I bent the rod like a whip and aimed at the hand of a man that is holding the weapon. The rod hit the back of his hand, causing the skin to swell red. The man dropped his weapon.

"Thi, this guy!"

Without pause I stepped forward and dealt a front kick at a man, next I kicked away the weapon to far away. I immediately hit another person so that he also dropped his weapon.

The Third is surprised. Not at me, but to the three men in front of me.

[There are three of them and yet they didn’t even try to surround their opponent, are these kids idiot? They’re really lacking in real battle experience.]

The man that I kicked the first is crouching on the ground and writhing in pain. I kicked him first because he looked like the leader, and it seems that I’m right. The remaining two aren’t as energetic as before.

I looked at the last man pointing his weapon at me while shaking. Young. He looked the same age with me.

When I pointed my rod to him, he swung his weapon in panic.

"You! You-!"

The young man with blue hair and blue eyes is scared at me. When I kicked away the weapon in his hand, he immediately prepared to run away.

Aria-san spoke.

"Wait, that person……"

When she spoke until that far, a loud voice came.

"What are you doing there!"

When we looked at the direction of the voice, a single tall man is walking toward us. It's a silver haired and brown skinned man with a serious face. He is wearing a mantel, but it's obvious from his body's movement that he is trained. Besides, the weapon hanging on his waist that is visible from the mantel's opening is a long sword.

The men ran away in panic. The girl yelled.

"Do, don't run! You guys, I won't be merciful if you run away!"

The girl seemed to be strong-willed, but it seems she can't move from fear. When the man arrived, he looked at me and the escaping men before thinking for a bit.

"……It looks like it will be better to hear about the situation a little."

I placed the rod on my shoulder and talked to the man. The girl can't run away because Aria-san and Sophia-san moved to stand behind her.

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"I see, certainly she can't complain anything even if you defended yourself. Besides, the three who ran away lost against fishing rod? I heard that the quality of the capital noble is low but, this is more than I imagined."

The girl gritted her teeth and glared at us. But, the man seems to be a noble. He doesn't show any sign of agitation at all.

The man's name is Halite Grants──a feudal lord noble. This time he came to Centralle together with his caregiver as a guard. His skill must be really valued.

"I don’t want to say this but, picking a quarrel but then getting the table turned on you won’t get you seen in a good light. How about both sides peacefully bury the hatchet here?"

When Halite-san looked at the girl and said that, the girl finally became able to move and yelled angrily.

"You’re just a village bumpkin feudal lord noble, what’s more from a small house that is a dependent to other house. Don’t you dare talk back to me!"

Then Halite-san scratched his long silver hair with a troubled look.

"So you don’t intend to back down. How troubling. If you insult me as a village bumpkin and picked a fight with me, then I’ll have to report this to my caregiver. I’ll say to him that I’m being resented by a capital noble young lady and she might assault me."

Then the girl is obviously starting to get shaken. Her eyes darted around. Aria-san asked for explanation to Sophia-san.

"What is going on?"

"A caregiver feudal lord will be a baron house at the very least. Even capital noble will hesitate to pick a fight with such house. After all, capital noble only have few private soldiers of their own."

Capital nobles lived under the protection of the king at Centralle. They don’t have any territory but have income in the form of annuity each year. They aren’t troubled with the problem of managing a territory, but it seems their income is far smaller compared to feudal lord noble.

Halite-san sighed.

"Both sides should back away here for each other’s sake. You said your name is Lyle-kun? Do you have any objection to that?"

I nodded. It’s not like I want to take revenge or anything. Rather, I don’t want to get involved with this girl. The girl began talking, starting with saying that it can’t be helped.

"I, it can’t be helped then. I’ll kindly shut my eyes to the rudeness of the village bumpkins. Move aside!"

The girl pushed aside Aria-san and Sophia-san and walked away in indignation. Her back figure didn’t look graceful at all.

Halite-san smiled bitterly.

"You should be careful to that kind of person. But more importantly, did you really defeat three men with that fishing rod?"

It seems Halite-san is more curious about this topic.

I swung the fishing rod.

"Yes. It’s flexible and it looks like it will really painful to get hit by it. Like this."

The rod made a sound of cutting air, but at the same time it strongly pulled at something. A yelling voice came from somewhere.

"Wai-, KYAAAAA!!"

When we turned at the direction of the voice, the girl from before got the back of her skirt lifted up. Looking closer, the string that is stretching from my fishing rod is connected to it. The hook caught the skirt. The skirt got lifted up and the inside is completely visible.

The Second spoke in astonishment.

[Lyle, you should take off the hook properly.]

The girl is flustered. The gazes of the four people surrounding me became stern. Halite-san looked at me.

"For now, let’s put down the fishing rod."

Aria-san is,

"Lyle, let’s talk for a bit."

Sophia-san is also angry.

"To think that Lyle-dono will do something this embarrassing."

I made excuse.

"Wro, wrong! This is an accident!"

The Third laughed.

[Ahahaha, Lyle is really amazing. He fished a girl with a fishing rod.]

The Sixth also laughed loudly.

[You fished a big catch there! Amazing!]

It’s not a laughing matter! When I looked at Novem, she is watching me with a serious face.

"Lyle-sama, I believe that I’m mistaken but……let me say first that girl is no good. She doesn’t pass the family precepts of Walt House."

Novem……what kind of man do you think I am? I’m thinking to talk to her about it later while cutting the string.

Then the girl looked this way with teary eyes and then she ran away.

Toward her back, I,

"I’m sorry! It wasn’t intentional! ……Did she hear it I wonder?"

The Fourth talked to me a bit angrily.

[It’s no good even if it’s not intentional! Chase her right away and apologize!]

I chased after the girl to apologize.

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Night.

In the inn’s dining hall, I listened about Halite-san from Novem.

"Bahnseim’s two great knights?"

Sophia-san is surprised that I don’t know about the two great knights. But, I didn’t know that Halite-san is that famous.

"He is a knight who raise great achievements at the border with Orlan. The other great knight is called the Sand Giant. However, that Halite-dono is called the Black Knight."

Orlan is the destination city of Rondo-san’s party. Because it’s a country border, mercenary and adventurer gathered there.

Novem continued talking.

"As a border, there is a lot of chance to raise achievement there. The border with Faunbeux is calm because the princess there will marry Bahnseim’s crown prince. Recently the northern part and Orlan are the center of the skirmishes."

Even if someone is a strong knight, they won’t be able to become famous if they don’t have the stage to raise achievement.

The Fifth taught me.

[Having something like a nickname will only get them targeted the more exaggerated the nickname is. But, if they fight while having a nickname and survived through it, then that means that they’re the real thing. Lyle right now will lose against him.]

Certainly Halite-san has an aura around him. I sensed that he is really strong.

"The world is vast."

When I said that, Aria-san recalled something and yelled.

"Ah, that’s right! Hey, about the three men who attacked us, didn’t one of them looked similar with Lyle?"

Novem immediately denied when she heard that.

"He isn’t. They only have the same hair color and eye color."

Aria-san is surprised.

"I, is that so? I, I thought they were similar though……"

Inside the Jewel, the Sixth fell into thought.

[Well, his hair and eyes were similar but, it feels like their pathetic atmosphere was also similar……. Well, it's not really a big deal! More importantly Lyle, today was fun!]

Certainly I was able to have fun. Various things also happened which made me tired but, there is no doubt that it was a fun holiday. But, the skirt incident wasn't my intention. I want to strongly assert that.

Epilogue

——The number of customer at Centralle's bar increased when it became night.

Halite visited a bar that was quite expensive. He talked with a waiter and got shown into a private room.

The guest he came to meet was waiting while drinking alcohol before him.

"Maxim, long time no see."

The large man called Maxim raised his hand at Halite.

"Ou, last time was when I headed to your place as reinforcement huh. You also look well."

A lot of skirmished happened at the country border, because of that sometimes they would request reinforcement from the surrounding. The two of them were acquainted from such chance.

"You "Sand Giant" also looks energetic like usual. And, have your heard about that story?"

After the waiter left the room, Halite talked to Maxim with a small voice.

"I want to believe that it's a lie though. Doing something like breaking off the engagement isn't a sane decision. That's even truer when the engagement is involving the relationship between two countries."

Halite was also of the same opinion. He carefully talked with a small voice so that no one else could hear. It might be overly cautious of him doing this in a private room, but that was just how dangerous this talk was.

"Even the rumor still hasn't spread widely but, it seems to be true. I've confirmed with my caregiver too."

"…..That’s not a funny joke."

He shortly talked because it wasn’t a story that could be said too loudly.

"The situation at Centralle is getting strange bit by bit since some time ago. That’s why my caregiver and your lord also went to Centralle."

Maxim drank his alcohol while talking about Centralle’s abnormality.

"It’s not just the nobles. Even the citizens feel strange. Do you know? When Walt House came to Centralle before this, it seems that a part of the city got really high-spirited. Certainly they’re a famous house but, it’s still abnormal."

Halite made a bitter face when he heard the name Walt House.

"The reason the crown prince broke off the engagement is also that Walt House. No, more accurately it’s the only daughter of Walt House."

"The only daughter? Ah, the eldest son was disinherited wasn’t it? I wondered what’s up with that but……wait, that story is true?"

Halite nodded and talked to Maxim about the information he gathered.

"I met that disinherited eldest son today. Certainly he got some strange side to him but, it didn’t seem so bad that he had to be disinherited. Rather he got some promise. If we fought, then even I or you will get injured facing him."

Maxim laughed hearing that.

"Nice. I welcome strong guy. It will be even better if it’s as ally. And, what do you mean by strange side?"

Halite hesitated to talk, and then he told about how Lyle defeated three men with a fishing rod and also reeling up a girl with it. Maxim listened with opened mouth and at the end he laughed loudly.

"That’s hilarious!"

Halite also laughed a bit.

"Certainly. Well, it’s not something to do to girl but, at the end he chased the girl to apologize, so he isn’t a bad person. Now then, let’s talk about the main topic."

Halite’s expression turned serious. Maxim also straightened his sitting posture.

"If the engagement is broken up like this, Bahnseim will be thrown into chaos. No, perhaps spark of conflict will be lit up all over the continent. No matter what it will be a bad development. Maxim, you should be careful too."

Maxim nodded, and then the two released their tension and drank together as friend──.

.

──Arumsaas.

It was the center of educational institution. A city that was unusual even within Bahnseim.

There were also a lot of noble youngsters attending the academy as student. Many of them rented apartment or slightly extravagant room to live, but it also wasn’t rare for the noble youngsters from house with peerage to rent a mansion in Arumsaas.

Inside one of such mansion.

Two sisters were living in a mansion that was rented by viscount house of Circry.

The elder sister Miranda Circry was using the lap of her little sister, Shannon Circry as pillow on her little sister’s bed with an empty expression.

Shannon caressed Miranda’s hair.

"Geez Onee-sama, this is because you’re so obstinate. Even though it would be better if you just obediently listen to me."

Shannon──she had wavy long hair with faint purple color and white skin. Perhaps because she never went outside, the whiteness of her skin was standing out. And then, what attracted notice from her above all else was her golden colored pupils in her drooping eyes. Normally her pupils had yellow color, but right now they were shining gold.

The elder sister Miranda had hair with light green color that grew until her shoulder. Her green eyes that usually looked bright were being closed. Her eyes would slowly open sometimes, but they were lightless and showing a lack of clarity.

She was sleeping on the lap of Shannon who had slender body, but the elder sister Miranda had feminine body that grew where it should grew.

Her face that was normally like a mischievous kid was buried onto her little sister’s lap without showing any vitality.

"Aua……"

She couldn’t make any word coherently, and her little sister was doing whatever she pleased with her. It was a strange sight.

Shannon looked up to the ceiling with eyes that couldn’t see, and then the corner of her lips rose into a smile.

"Soon. It will be soon. The Circry house that threw me away and also that woman who wouldn’t recognize me, I’ll make them recognize me."

Shannon clenched her right hand, and with her eyes that couldn't see she was watching the "flow of mana". It was something that normal people couldn't see. She couldn't see what normal people could see, but her eyes could see what couldn't be seen.

It was the "power" that Shannon who was frail and casted away by her house obtained.

Shannon obtained the skill to read the flow and made use of mana. She used her elder sister Miranda as a guinea pig in the attempt to control her heart.

"Now, Onee-sama, I'll have you become my cute puppet. Work for my sake okay?"

From a position that Shannon couldn't see, Miranda who was burying her face into Shannon's lap lifted the corner of her lips and smiled with a face that looked even more calculating than Shannon──.

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──The next day.

Miranda stood in the kitchen from early in the morning and prepared breakfast.

"Haa. ……I wonder why the maid wouldn't continue? There is no problem with the work requirement, and I think the salary is better compared to other place, and yet why"

A daughter of noble was cooking in the morning and even took care of her little sister. Considering her position as a capital noble, and furthermore as a young lady of a viscount house, it was a strange sight.

The sound of the door opening could be heard.

"Oh. You woke up already, Shannon?"

"Yes, Onee-sama."

Her little sister replied with a frail voice. She was sitting on a wheelchair and moved while touching the wall. In front of such little sister, Miranda responded with a smile.

"Wait for a bit more okay? I'll prepare the meal soon. Also, I'll prepare the meal for the noon too, so eat it later properly. I'm going to the academy after this, so no matter who come to visit, you mustn't carelessly go out."

Shannon replied adorably.

"I understand Onee-sama. More importantly, are you busy in the academy?"

Miranda placed her hand on her waist.

"Somewhat, I think. There is an interesting class though. ……Oops, I have to hurry. Shannon, let's wash your face before breakfast."

Miranda who looked after her blind little sister was a really nice big sister. She was kind, and then because she couldn't leave alone Shannon who was blind, she even brought her together to this Arumsaas.

"Yes, Onee-sama."

Miranda pushed the wheelchair toward the bathroom and asked Shannon what she wanted to eat today.

It was the sight of two close sisters──.

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The academy city Arumsaas could be seen from the connecting coach’s window.

The long trip is quite interesting, but as expected sitting continuously like this is also becoming boring. I looked outside the window and felt relieved that the destination is coming into view.

"We finally arrived at Arumsaas."

It was located near the southern part. It’s directly connected to Centralle through the connecting coach. The travelling is convenient but, the distance is really far as expected.

Aria-san also rotated her shoulder as though to exclaim ‘finally’.

"My body hurt from sitting too much. Even so, there are a lot of buildings that are higher than the outer wall there."

There are a lot of buildings that peeked through the outer wall. It’s obvious how high the buildings are even from afar.

Sophia-san also looked outside the window in slight excitement.

"Arumsaas is also a really big city isn’t it? It’s amazing how developed it is even though there is no feudal lord there."

Novem explained to Sophia-san.

"It’s because it’s a special place, and it’s a city that is rich with resource from the dungeon it has. Well, it seems that it’s definitely stranger than other city. Also, I heard that the city isn’t too kind toward adventurer."

I’m surprised.

"Eh? Will we be fine then?"

Novem amended in a hurry.

"No, the treatment there won’t be that horrible. It’s just that the priority there is unique. In Dalien the feudal lord is controlling the guild firmly, but in Arumsaas it’s the academy that is controlling the city."

The academy is controlling the city? I don’t really understand the place.

The ancestors inside the Jewel are also really interested.

[Academy city huh. I wonder what kind of place it is.]

[Well, we’ll understand when we arrive. More importantly, I’m curious with the library there.]

[It will be great if you can learn various things there.]

[The academy is controlling the city? I won’t be able to say anything without actually seeing it myself.]

[It feels like there will be few place to have fun in a stuffy place like this.]

[It has a dungeon and has an abundance of magic stone and materials after all. Also, it’s a place to send noble youngsters to is it? It feels like there will be a lot of capital noble there. I hope there won’t be any dispute there.]

That’s a bit of concern because we got into a bit of dispute at Centralle. I don’t want to get dragged into unnecessary trouble.

It will be great if I can learn various things but…….

When I noticed, Novem is looking at my face with a smile.

"Wha, what?"

"Lyle-sama, you’re making a really good face."

"Is that so? It will be great if that’s true."

When I answered like that, Aria-san also spoke to me.

"Yep, your face look better than before. After the dungeon subjugation from your expression it feels like you've been freed from something."

Sophia-san also said a similar opinion.

"You're right. Should I say that the experience there isn't pointless?"

I scratched my cheek shyly.

"I've promised Rondo-san and Rex-san after all. If I don't do my best, I'll get laughed when we meet again at Beim."

Yes, I promised. That we will meet at Beim. Then, right now I can just aim at Beim. I still can't imagine myself as a first rate adventurer.

However, I want to stand side by side equally with my friends.

The ancestors inside the Jewel are also a bit understanding at my opinion.

[Well, it's fine like this for now.]

[Yeah. You can decide after learning various things.]

[I myself am interested what kind of vision of the future that Lyle will have.]

[No matter what you're going to do, you will need strength and money. In order to obtain them, I can agree with you polishing your adventuring skill.]

[I wish that you'll also learn to have fun for a bit though.]

[Should I feel happy for my grandson's growth, or should I grieve that he will keep progressing as adventurer like this……]

The connecting coach approached Arumsaas's gate.

I said to Novem, Aria-san, and Sophia-san.

"Well then, let's prepare to get down."

Arumsaas, just what kind of place it is? I’m also getting a bit nervous from anxiety and expectation.

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